

**10c***News, Reviews,  
Opinions**Published Every  
Friday***10c**

# THE FILM MERCURY

**VERITAS****VINCIT**Sixteen Pages  
Vol. 8, No. 10HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.  
FRIDAY, JULY 27, 1928*Edited by*  
TAMAR LANE

## New Line-up at First National

### Warner Stock Takes A Boom

#### **Tamar Lane**

#### **L. J. SELZNICK IN BIG TALKIE DEAL?**

Among the most interesting news of the week is the report to the effect that Lewis J. Selznick is not only throwing his hat back into the movie ring, but he is already entering negotiations to take over the Cortellaphone talking device.

A dispatch from the East says that "L. J." is now under way with a deal to acquire control of the Cortella Synchronic Pictures Corp., an organization manufacturing sound equipment and sound productions independent of the so-called sound film "trust."

Lewis J. Selznick is a clever organizer and promoter and if he gets going with a talking device he is going to make the big film companies, as well as the Electrical Research outfit, do a little worrying.

"L. J." has long been one of the most outstanding figures in the film industry and there is always some interesting news for the papers when he begins to operate.

IS SID MAKING  
ANOTHER BLUNDER?

*Continued on Page Two*

## The New York Angle on Films

### Lewis J. Selznick In Come-Back

### Richard Dix Vs. Bill Haines

### Pink Tea Columnists Panned

### Broadway Film Chatter

## REVIEWS

**"Three Ring Marriage"****"Kit Carson"****"None But The Brave"****"Celebrity"****"Diamond Handcuffs"**

## Tamar Lane

*Continued from Front Page*

According to announcements, Sid Grauman has selected "White Shadows of the South Seas" as the next attraction at the Hollywood Chinese Theatre. This would make it appear as though Grauman is going to lower the standard of his theatre and perhaps charge cut-price admissions.

"White Shadows" is an entertaining picture of scenic beauty, but it is not of the magnitude or lavishness that local theatregoers have come to expect from Grauman. With sound synchronization and a prologue the production may be built up in a manner that will attract good business to the theatre. In the long run, however, such presentations as these can only weaken Grauman's prestige as a showman of super productions.

\* \* \*

## Tivoli, London, Sold By M-G-M

London.—The Tivoli, famous London movie theatre where "Ben Hur" made a record run of more than a year, has been sold by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer for a price which has not been made public, it was learned this week.

The buyer is the Provincial Cinematograph Theatres, Ltd., who have purchased 90 per cent of the stock. It is understood the famous Strand picture house will be devoted to the presentation of "talkies" which are just being introduced in Europe.

## Warner Stock Takes a Boom

While The Film Mercury has constantly cautioned members of the film colony against investing in highly touted stocks, and in several instances accurately predicted their downfall, readers will recall that a short time ago The Film Mercury stated that Warner Bros. stock was a good buy and due for an upward movement in Wall St.

At the time The Film Mercury advised the purchase of Warner Bros. stock — about three weeks ago—it was selling at \$35 a share. Warner stock has taken a boom as forecast and is this week selling at over \$60—a jump of over \$25 a share in less than a month for any one who bought at the time The Film Mercury recommended.

It is highly probable that Warner stock will go several points higher, but from now on the stock becomes a speculation pure and simple. It is not a safe, permanent investment at anything over \$50. Those who have the inside dope on what is being done with the stock may still be able to trade it in and make a profit, but extreme caution should be used.

\* \* \*

### Barry Norton Loaned

Barry Norton, Fox Films player, has been loaned to Paramount to play the leading juvenile in "The Sins of the Fathers," Emil Jannings' next starring vehicle.

\* \* \*

### Leonard to Direct

Robert Z. Leonard will direct Norma Shearer in "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney," her next starring picture for M-G-M.

## Rockett Appointed Head Of First National Production

As forecast in last week's *Film Mercury*, and its previous issues, the long expected shake-up in First National production ranks has taken place.

Al Rockett has been placed in charge of all First National Studio activities, as well as actual production at the Burbank plant, according to announcement by Joseph P. Kennedy, special advisor for First National Pictures, who is now in California.

Several other changes were made through resignation by members of the Burbank staff. David H. Thompson, assistant production manager; George Stout, head of the operating department; A. W. Allison, chief of the accounting department; Ralph Poucher, newly appointed head of Firatone, and Miss Harriet Morris, chief of the research department, are leaving their positions.

From the New York office

came announcement of the resignation of Richard A. Rowland, vice-president and general manager of First National Pictures, as also Mrs. Florence Strauss, head of the reading department, and Samuel Spring, secretary and treasurer.

Rockett has been in charge of production for First National for the past year.

The Burbank studios of First National will produce close to sixty feature-length pictures during the coming year, the largest production schedule in the history of the organization. Rockett will guide the destinies of these pictures, and also handle the management of the studio personnel.

\* \* \*

### Harry Braxton Titles M-G-M Production

Harry Braxton is writing the titles for "Morgan's Last Raid," M-G-M production, starring Tim McCoy.

## Back and Freelanciug



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# The New York Angle On Films

By OLIVER UNDERWOOD

New York—One large sized glass of ice water has been thrown on the superheated enthusiasm for talkie production. Western Electric has made public announcement of the fact that it has on hand 799 contracts for the installation of talkie projectors in as many theatres, all of which will be completed by January 1st, 1929. Nearly 400 are already equipped.

To the casual onlooker that looks like great progress. But sales managers of the various big line companies are having cold shivers up and down their spines, wondering how a maximum of 799 theatres are going to be made to pay the cost of synchronizing 158 feature pictures this coming season.

Perhaps that doesn't mean anything to you. Look at it this way. It means there will be one feature production for every five theatres that can use it. If the same proportion was maintained throughout the industry there would be something like 4,400 features made in America each year to supply the 22,000 theatres.

That shows how over supplied the talkie field will be and why sales managers are going gray headed and praying that production managers will stick to the silent pictures and be satisfied with sound effects. That will give them a chance to stick some of the talkie cost over onto the silent theatres. The first few talkies, however, should make plenty of money.

Of course, these figures only cover the Western Electric projecting apparatus, but Western Electric apparatus is only for W. E. licensed productions, and the W. E. licensed productions are for projection only on W. E. equipment. The 156 features tabulated above are those announced only by W. E. licensed companies.

New York exhibitors established an unique record this past week. Three pre-release houses, all competitors of each

other, in fact within a radius of five streets of each other, hung up new attendance records for the respective houses, during weather that was sweltering hot for five days of the seven and which provided heavy thunder showers on the other two. The theatres are the Roxy, the Paramount and the Strand.

The Roxy had "The Street Angel" for the first time at popular prices, with a synchronized musical score and some sound effects. The Strand was in its second week with the all talkie feature "Lights of New York."

None of the houses established new weekly gross receipts records, but both the Roxy and the Paramount established new receipt records per show. This despite lower admissions, due to the abolition of the amusement tax the latter part of June. The Strand is operating on a lower admission basis than ever existed at the house, so the receipts did not break the best records, but the attendance did.

The Roxy and the Strand hold over their shows this week. Dix in "Warming Up" was transferred to the Rivoli where it will run with its synchronized sound effects, but will be minus the stage show it had at the Paramount.

The surprise of the week in the theatre field was the flop registered by "The King of Kings." It was withdrawn from the Rivoli after two weeks, during which time it grossed less than "Ramona" did in any one week of its extended run at the same theatre. This despite the fact that it was the first time this DeMille special has been shown at popular prices, and it also had the advantage of a synchronized musical score with some sound effects during the storm and after the crucifixion, which has seldom been equalled in the canned music field.

It is worthy of note that ten

out of the twenty-one productions listed as "selected pictures" this month by the National Board of Review are made from stories written directly for the screen. Those screen authors who acquired this distinction are: Frances Marion with "The Cossacks;" Wellyn Totman with "Green Grass Widows;" Edmund Goulding with "Happiness Ahead;" Ernest Booth with "Ladies of the Mob;" Ernest Pascal with "Man-made Women;" H. L. Gates and Eleanor Browne with "The Red Dance;" John Russell with "The Red Mark;" Gale Van Every with "Telling the World;" C. Gardner Sullivan with "The Tempest," and R. L. Rigby with "The Toilers."

\* \* \*

## Church, Then Films; And It's in Iowa!

St. Joseph, Mo.—Conway, Iowa, has no Sunday movie question. Church services are held every Sunday night in an open-air theatre. The services end promptly at 8:30 o'clock and the congregation may then leave or pay an admission price and see a six-reel film. Everybody seems to be satisfied and the motion picture theatre owners say their crowds have increased.

\* \* \*

## Film Life of Columbus

United Artists will make a film based on the life and career of Christopher Columbus. Fred Niblo will direct the production.

\* \* \*

## \$150,000 Film Suit

### Charges Monopoly

Omaha,—Suit for \$150,000 damages against the Omaha Film Board of Trade and the Omaha branches of nine nationally known motion picture distributing agencies was filed in Federal Court here recently by owners of a suburban theatre. Victor Newton and Thomas H. Leddy, the plaintiffs, charge a monopoly.

## ANABEL LANE Says

The present amazing vogue for talkies will leave the theatres that are showing only the silent movies in a serious situation. The only logical way that they can meet this condition will be by lowering their admission prices. With the poor financial state existing in this country a small entrance fee should prove inviting.

A prediction made some months ago—before the sound cinemas became popular is repeated now—that motion picture theatres will have to lower their admission cost, even the "talkies" will not be able to hold up the high prices over a period of time. Already the Strand in New York has lowered theirs—and this gesture will be but the forerunner for the other theatres to follow.

—

Although we critics have been unanimous in harpooning John Barrymore for selling out to the celluloid art, he no doubt will have the laugh on us. For the voice has always been this actor's forte. While he has gradually been sliding downward in the screen firmament the last few years, he will probably regain for himself the title of the first actor of the land.

—

Hollywood already shows promise of being overcrowded in the field for voice teachers. They are arriving from New York, Europe and elsewhere. Actors, stage and concert singers, are announcing they are ready to teach. An amusing note in this condition is that Hollywood ever ready to choose the foreigner over the American does not realize the importance of correct pronunciation and they are flocking to a few Europeans who should first learn to talk English before teaching it.

\* \* \*

## Will Direct Denny

Joseph Henaberry has been engaged to direct Reginald Denny's next comedy production for Universal, "Red Hot Speed."



# THE FILM PARADE

*As seen by* RICHARD WATTS Jr.

The importance of personality in motion pictures was pretty effectively demonstrated again last week, with the presentation in rival theatres of films starring such eminent performers as Richard Dix and William Haines. Dix appeared in a baseball comedy called "Warming Up" and Haines was under observation in a newspaper drama called "Telling the World," and neither work was a particularly important one. Any difference in their quality, in fact, was almost entirely due to the respective work of their stars. Well, "Warming Up" was a fairly good picture and "Telling the World" was simply terrible.

Of course, there are those observers who hold out strenuously for the claim that the baseball film was the more effective of the two because it was provided with sound effects to represent the noises made by the crowds and the players on the occasion of a World's Series game. This belief, even if true, is of scant help to the talking films because the accompaniment to "Warming Up" was little more than that provided by a competent orchestra and those usual off-screen noises used in every well-scored film. And, as a matter of fact, it is of little help to Mr. Haines, either. For despite any extraneous aid, "Warming Up" was a better picture than "Telling the World" only through the superiority of Richard Dix over William Haines. The differences would be equally noticeable if both pictures were run off in complete silence.

The important thing is that Dix is an engaging, pleasant-mannered player who made the leading role of a rookie pitcher entirely sympathetic and completely believable in all his predicaments. To counteract this advantage of acting, "Telling the World" offered Mr.

Haines, who was fresh, bumptious, thoroughly unbelievable and entirely the show-off actor when he should have been representing a fairly human being. It is my carefully considered opinion that by his work in his newest picture he proves himself conclusively the most annoying performer on the American screen.

It is undeniably true that my objection to Haines is based less on a matter of acting than, as I confessed at the outset, a question of personality. But I think I have a pretty good case against the cinema's Show Off in the field of histrionics, too. In "Telling the World" he is supposed to be a fresh young man looking for a job on a newspaper. He bursts in on the city editor, pushes his way into a job, is generally fresh and obstreperous and full of cute tricks, and, as result of his antics, he becomes little less than the pride of the office. Yet you know all the time that if a cub reporter rushed into a newspaper and acted in the William Haines manner he would have fled for his life or have been tossed quietly out of the building.

There really isn't a moment in which Haines is believable in "Telling the World." As a newspaper man he is a joke, and as a fascinating devil who simply bowls every one over by his charm, he is even worse. He is constantly being fresh and wisecracking and cheaply arrogant and generally insufferable. He is just too constantly full of tricks for words. He is the sort of man who slaps you resoundingly on the back, shakes your hand until it hurts, plays practical jokes and says, "And how!" He is never at a loss for a new way to express wearisome blatancy. In a word he is the sort of man you would either run a block to avoid or would walk a mile or two for

a chance to hit over the head. Yet on the screen you are supposed to accept him as just the most charming and freshly engaging young rascal extant.

It is not, I should perhaps add, that I insist on film heroes being of the retiring, wistful, Charles Ray type. As a matter of act the old shrinking violet leading man was beginning to get just a bit annoying, too. But Mr. Haines carries the thing too far. Even he must have moments in which he doubts whether he is quite the perfection of fascinating masculinity. In his films, though, he goes right ahead being 100 per cent pleased with himself. Compared to him George Kelly's Aubrey Piper and Carl Laemmle's Glenn Tryon are runners-up to Harry Langdon as representatives of wistfulness and the inferiority complex.

This incredible Haines character puts a very considerable burden on the back of the supporting players, too. They all have to stand around and pretend to admire the young man and still make you believe in what they are doing. Particularly was this noticeable last week in the case of Miss Anita Page, the adoring ingenue of "Telling the World." Miss Page is a pretty child and a likeable one but when she has to convince you that she just adores the antics of her stalwart star, she is really too nice for you to believe such a thing of her. And when she is forced to get very tearful because she feels she isn't worthy of the gallant youth, you just can't share her tears over the matter.

Meanwhile Mr. Dix in "Warming Up," was making a juvenile and not especially believable baseball romance good entertainment by a particularly engaging performance. There is nothing of that unbearable freshness, that insufferable ar-

rogance of the Haines characterization about it. Mr. Dix's rookie was simple, credible, quietly amusing and thoroughly likeable and so he adds to the film a disarming quality that makes you overlook many of its faults. Mr. Haines' portrayal, on the other hand, makes the defects of story stand out all the more vigorously. And he wasn't a bad actor either, once.

\* \* \*

## Al Jolson Signed

### For New Vitaphones

Al Jolson has been signed by Warner Brothers to appear in more productions for that company. Upon completion of his current production Jolson will leave for the East to appear in his new stage vehicle, "Mister Bones." After a season on the stage he will return to Hollywood to appear in some new Vitaphone pictures.

\* \* \*

## Turpin In Vaudeville

Ben Turpin, screen comedian, is starting on a vaudeville tour.

\* \* \*

## McCormicks to Travel

Colleen Moore and John McCormick, her husband, are leaving Hollywood for a trip of several weeks.

\* \* \*

## To Direct New One

Mervyn LeRoy, First National director, will handle the megaphone on "Rosie of the Ritz," starring Alice White.

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## Short Dramas Should Be Encouraged

Recently a number of Hollywoodites entered the short reel drama field. They had noticed the unfavorable reaction of audiences, exhibitors and writers against the dreadful two-reel comedies. Bravely these pioneers invested their small savings in attempting something a little out of the ordinary. While they have been fairly successful in their adventures they have not received the encouragement or acknowledgement that their efforts justified.

The two-reel pictures unappropriately called comedies cost from \$5,000 to \$15,000. The films turned out by those who have started the short dramatic films have ranged from \$97 to \$1,000. With a substantial sum of money who can predict what these groups might make.

The exhibitors have not responded to these short subjects as fairly as they should. A few of these cinemas have been impressionistic and it is probable that some of the audiences did not enthuse over them. But to be honest the exhibitors should admit that many theatregoers become restless and impatient during the so-called two-reel comedy. Habit however, is so strong the theatre owners stick to the beaten path rather than take a step forward.

One of the films criticised was that directed by Robert Florey. It is called "Hollywood Extra 9413" and is an impressionistic satire. It is a brilliant, biting and correct expose of the experiences of an extra. Why it is difficult to understand I cannot comprehend. No doubt it is that those who are accustomed to see and laugh at a man kicking a woman in the slats, to roar at someone taking castor oil, fail to find any appreciation in something worthwhile. It takes a long time to even halfway educate the masses,\*exhibitors and producers.

If this production had been made in Europe and heralded as a hit, it would, no doubt have created much talk and have been called a masterpiece.

My advice to the beginners in this movement for better short subjects is to continue. The dialogue in the talkies will hasten the Little Theatre movement, where eventually they will have to show better productions if they wish to survive and they will offer a market for artistic efforts. The commercial palaces also will find that they will have to offer something better than the putrid comedies they are now showing. So those who have been courageous enough to spend their hard earned money in this new field should keep a brave heart.

—ANABEL LANE.

### Powell Assigned Role

William Powell has one of the featured leads in Paramount's production of "Interference," to be directed by Lothar Mendez. Clive Brook and Evelyn Brent have the other featured leads.

### In Vaudeville

Mary Kornman, Johnny Downs and "Scooter" Lowry, original members of Hal Roach's "Our Gang" comedies, will appear at the Orpheum Theatre in Los Angeles starting Sunday, July 29.

DIALOGUE — TITLES — EDITING

### ALFRED HUSTWICK

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PRODUCTION



*Written By*

HARVEY GATES



WARNER BROTHERS

## VIEWS AND REVIEWS

### "CELEBRITY."

A P.D.C.-Pathe release.  
Directed by Tay Garnett.  
Continuity by George Drumgold and Tay Garnett.  
Cast includes Robert Armstrong, Lina Basquette and Clyde Cook.  
Previewed at the Carmel Theatre.

#### Critical Viewpoint:

This film is apparently a take-off on Gene Tunney. It deals with a fighter whose manager gets the idea of presenting him as an intellectual and poetical gent. This opens the way for some fairly amusing comedy, especially in one sequence, where the "pug" delivers a speech before a women's club group.

Although there are no situations in the story of outstanding dramatic power, the affairs and experiences of the fighter and dapper manager are dealt with in an engaging manner, interwoven with enough love interest to round out the appeal of the picture. Several human touches have also been injected.

Some of the scenes between the fighter and the girl are slow and are played for too much footage. This makes the film drag in several spots.

In the championship boxing match, which serves as the climax in the story, there is nothing which shows why the hero suddenly comes to life and defeats the champion, after he is unmercifully beaten in the first round or two. This is not only unconvincing but it removes all thrill from the fight and should be remedied. More fight scenes are also needed. Tay Garnett has done well in his first directorial assignment. The situations as a whole are not only well staged but he has treated some of them in a novel manner and used effective but not overdone camera angles.

Clyde Cook takes first honors as the manager. Robert Armstrong is impressive in some scenes but misses in others.

#### Box Office Angle:

This is a light comedy-drama that should be fair entertainment for the majority of the atreagoers, if you can get them in. There is nothing much to exploit, except to advertise the fact that "Celebrity" is a satire on modern day pugilism.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

### Magnavox Gets Settlement in Patent Fight

Officials of the Magnavox Company have taken up the question of patent infringement with manufacturers of "talking movies," and have arrived at an amicable settlement with Western Electric Company, subsidiary of American Telephone and Telegraph, which manufactures sets for Warner Brothers' Motion Picture Company, according to a story released this week by the New York News Bureau.

Officials of Magnavox Company stated recently that all dynamic loud speakers not manufactured or licensed by the company are infringements of Magnavox patents. Sound motion pictures are using the principles of dynamic speakers.

### Luddy Directing Lake

Edward Luddy is directing "The Soldier," in which Arthur Lake is being starred by Universal.

\* \* \*

### Beery With Gotham

Noah Beery has been signed by Harold Shumate of Gotham Productions for the initial talking picture to be made by that company.

### Donovan Injured

Frank P. Donovan, producing the Short Story Classics at Tec-Art Studios, broke his ankle Monday afternoon and will be laid up for at least two weeks, according to his physician. Donovan has shipped his first two short classics, "The District Doctor" and "The Necklace" East.

## Mountain Cabin for Sale

FOR SALE—Completely furnished Mountain Cabin with large victrola and radio—situated in the heart of the Malibu Mountains on lake with five and a half miles shore line. Only one hour by auto from Hollywood. Cost me about three thousand; worth twenty-five hundred, will take two thousand. This includes boat equipped for sailing, interest in boat house, membership in beautiful club and also stock in club. You will find the best fishing and hunting in Southern California. An ideal place for scenario writer or director seeking rest and quiet. Address Cabin Owner, care of Film Mercury.

**JAMES A. STARR**  
**TITLES AND DIALOGUE**  
**"THE LITTLE WILDCAT"**  
**DIRECTED BY**  
**RAY ENRIGHT**  
**WARNER BROTHERS**



## Broadway Film Chatter

By OLIVER UNDERWOOD

New York.—Just as things had quieted down in regard to the affiliations of producing companies with talkie systems, Irving Rossheim, president of First National Pictures and also of the Stanley Theatres company, threw a rock into the placid waters by announcing that First National had signed with Electrical Research Products, Inc., for at least thirty talkie pictures this coming year. That sounds like old news, the signing of First National for the use of Western Electric talkie process. Clifford B. Hawley, then president of the company made the same announcement some ten weeks ago.

Since then Mr. Rossheim became president and on the same day Joseph P. Kennedy, president of FBO, adviser to Pathe, and now spoken of as being the chairman of the executive committee of RCA Photophone, became adviser to FN. So a week ago it occasioned no surprise when FN announced that

its first synchronized picture "Lilac Time" would be done by the Photophone process, and the Central Theatre here, and the Carthay Circle in Hollywood would be wired by the Photophone system for the eastern and western premieres of this picture. Inquiries as to what FN had done with its Western Electric license were referred to Mr. Kennedy. E. B. Deer speaking for Kennedy said that the WE license which Mr. Hawley had announced had never been accepted by the signing the contract. WE admitted this.

The situation was thus when Kennedy, Deer and others of the Kennedy staff left New York on their present trip to Hollywood, with the announced intention of observing the FN production machinery and to remove any monkey wrenches if they found some interfering with the smooth running. While Kennedy is on the train Rossheim makes the announcement of the affiliation with W-

## Small to Make Sound Pictures

Edward Small, independent producer, is to make a series of sound productions. Small is responsible for the alliance between Warner Brothers and Fannie Brice and it is reported that he may make the future Fannie Brice pictures.

Small has released most of his former productions through First National but it is not known through what channels he plans to release his sound films.

E. The big question which the industry is waiting an answer to is: Has Kennedy supreme power in First National? and if so, has he come to the conclusion that Electrical Research Products can keep Photophone off its projecting apparatus, and therefore has bowed to the inevitable and agreed to use the system which has made and is making 95% of all the theatre installations that have been ordered?

## Paper Cinema Film Invented

Berlin.—Moving picture film made of paper, promising to revolutionize the movie industry, has been invented by a Berlin engineer after four years of secret experiments in a paper factory near Schwerin, in Mecklenburg.

The manufacture of a paper at once as transparent as glass and as flexible and strong as celluloid has been achieved, according to Berlin newspapers, but the name of the inventor is not revealed.

The paper film is expected to supplant celluloid for small movie apparatus such as is used in homes, but further development is required for use in regular movie apparatus the inventor states.

It is declared the paper film will make possible a reduction of 60 per cent in present costs. American film representatives here are skeptical about the possibility of paper films.

# John The McDermott

The brilliant and clever young author wishes to announce in his usual modest and unassuming manner that he has just finished the story for the next Harold Lloyd production, which of course means that it will undoubtedly be the greatest success Mr. Lloyd has ever had.

It is possible at this time that Mr. McDermott could be approached in regard to a new assignment.

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*Scenario By*

JOHN F. GOODRICH

*Adaptation By*

JOHN F. GOODRICH

FILM DAILY

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Raoul Walsh—What Price Glory, Loves of Carmen, Sadie Thompson.  
Josef Von Sternberg—The Last Command, Underworld.  
Victor Fleming—Hula, The Rough Riders, The Way of All Flesh.  
Fred Niblo—Camille, Ben Hur, The Enemy, The Devil Dancer.  
Ernst Lubitsch—The Student Prince.  
James Cruze—The City Gone Wild, Old Ironsides, On to Reno, We're All Gamblers.

*Scenario Collaboration*

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## Pans Pink Tea Columnists

Editor, Film Mercury:

Can't something be done to gag these gushing L. A. film reviewers and columnists? They spill more adjectives of silly praise over rotten pictures and cheap personalities than would seem humanly possible—especially when their friends and social hosts have played a part in the making of some production.

Everything and everybody connected with a film is "just perfectly wonderful," "too dear for anything" until it becomes tiresome to those who are reading the same twaddle day in and day out. Don't the managing editors ever read the piffle that is being dispensed by these pink tea hounds?

Surely the producers and other members of the film colony cannot be honored or place any reliance in the stuff that these giddy gadabouts hand out when everybody—not matter how undeserving—is praised in the same honeyed and endearing terms. Their comments are too obviously insincere and savor too much of paid write ups to mean anything to an intelligent reader.

Is it any wonder that the general public has the impression that the movie crowd is largely composed of a collection of ignorant and illiterate "nouveaux riches."

Gordon S. Hastings.

## Paris Film Ban Scored by Wilson

Washington — A protest against French discrimination against American motion pictures has been made by the American Minister to Switzerland, Hugh Wilson, at the meeting of the International Conference on Prohibition and Restrictions on Imports and Exports. Mr. Wilson's address before the conference has just been received by the State Department.

Wilson pointed out that the United States had no desire to take exception to the right of any nation to censor films for the purpose of maintaining public morals, but that it did object to censorship for the purpose of trade discrimination.

The new French regulations, he declared, provide that any one of the thirty-two men sitting on the film commission may refuse entrance to the country of an American film, and that thereafter any film

## Use Three Scripts

Berlin—"The Richest Woman in the World" is being produced by Ufa in three different versions. One is according to a German scenario, another to a French and a third English. Object is to give the picture bigger drawing power in France, Germany and England.

In Germany the production will be released by National Co-Warner Bros. Exteriors were made in Egypt.

hauded by any person who had ever had any connection with the barred picture might be refused a visa for all time to visit France.

France is going too far with this drastic rule, he hinted.

Frank A. Henry, commercial attache of the Department of Commerce at Barcelona, Spain, reported that one of the large stores at Barcelona is making "movies" of its customers to pull trade.

# NOW IN PRODUCTION

## Reginald Denny

*In*

# "RED HOT SPEED"

DIRECTION JOSEPH HENABERRY

*An*

## ORIGINAL STORY

*By*

# GLADYS LEHMAN

A UNIVERSAL-MOVIETONE



## The Movies Try to Talk

The current issue of The American Mercury carries, under the above heading, an article on sound films by Robert F. Sisk. We herewith quote some extracts from it:

"That art referred to so often as the silent one—motion pictures—seems to be in considerable danger of losing its character. From the time the firm of Warner Brothers first consorted with the Vitaphone device for the synchronization of sound with pictures, the moguls of the industry have paid close and eager attention to the new invention, and now their interest has reached so rabid a point that the major portion of the film business is determined to make its pictures talk. The Warners have already released three films which do this trick—'Tenderloin,' 'Glorious Betsy' and 'The Lion and the Mouse.' In the former there is the shriek of a lady about to be attacked. Her cry is, 'No, not that!' The first-night audience in New York tittered, but the magnates are undismayed. In the studios of William Fox the talking news-reel has been a regular thing for over a year. Such events as Lindbergh's take-off on his European flight, with the accompanying noises, have thrilled audiences from coast to coast. Short films, depicting Beatrice Lillie, Raquel Meller, Robert Benchley and other such diverters of the public mind in the act of being dramatic, have been regularly released. All these have been experiments. Now a rush of talking films is on us, and it will be the first stage of a revolution which is going to do either one of two things—remake the movie industry or ruin it.

"Now nearly everybody in the trade of any importance has announced his intention of making talking films. Paramount will reopen its Long Island studios, and is already making the stage play, 'Burlesque,' as a talker. The First National is making 'Lilac Time.' Universal wants to make 'Show Boat.' The optimists are saying that there will be 1,000 theatres wired for talking films by January 1. The conservatives seem to agree with them. There are between 19,000 and 20,000 film theatres in the United States. Of this great number, it is said that 12,000 are of 600 seats or over, and therefore capable of supporting the talking film. The apparatus necessary to its successful showing costs from \$4,000 to \$20,000 to install.

"At the moment the thinkers of the film trade—don't laugh, there are a few!—believe that picture patronage has reached the saturation point. Anything, therefore, which promises to increase it will be received with an acclaim similar to that given successful revolutionists in Guatemala. That this saturation point has actually been reached has been proven several times in the big cities. Let it be assumed, to illustrate, that before a certain big house went up there were four theatres in the locality. After the big house opened, trade dropped at the other theatres. The big house took up the slack, but the total patronage remained the same. Now it is hoped fondly that the talking films will create new business.

"As things stand in the average *de luxe* theatre, there are 3,000 seats and five shows daily. This makes a total daily capacity of 15,000. But the boys feel they've had a big day if they play to a total of two and one-half capacity shows, or 7,500 people. Obviously, they are not getting all the possible return on their investment. So the bankers who have the theatre chains tied up instruct them to inquire into ways and devices for corraling new customers."

## Fox Buys Poli Theatre Chain

New York. — William Fox announced the purchase by the Fox Theatre Corporation of the Poli chain of twenty motion picture theatres in Massachusetts and Connecticut. The chain has an appraisal valuation of \$26,000,000, Fox said.

The chain, with a seating capacity of approximately 45,000, is described as the largest motion picture house combination in Central and Southern New England.

The circuit was built up by Sylvester Z. Poli of New Haven, during the past 30 years.

Poli came to the United States as a boy and started in the theatre business exhibiting wax figures which he modeled himself.

Starting in the early days of the motion picture industry with a single theatre, he made a quick success. Besides his picture and vaudeville business, he had his own stock companies showing in his own theatres.

Fox announced that his company has set aside \$1,000,000 to install Movietone in all the houses of the Poli circuit.

## Talking Films Cried Down by Europe Leaders

New York.—Talking films are regarded as a "costly and futile craze" by English and German film manufacturers. Kurt F. Hubert, director of the German UFA., and John Maxwell, chairman of the British International Pictures Corporation board, said this week on their arrival from Europe. They are here to survey the American picture industry and the "speaking pictures."

"We have been experimenting with them for several years," said Maxwell. "They have never demonstrated themselves to be convincing. It is a fad which will cost the distributors a pretty penny before they are through and then the novelty will wear off, and the public will demand entertainment less mechanical."

\* \* \*

### Moore With F.B.O.

Tom Moore has been signed by F.B.O. to appear in two productions. The pictures will be "The Last Haul" and "The Yellow Back." The last is a James Oliver Curwood story.

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# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

**"KIT CARSON,"** a Paramount release.

Featuring Fred Thomson.

Directed by Alfred Werker and Lloyd Ingraham.

Scenario by Frank Clifton.

Cast includes Nora Lane, Raoul Paloi, William Courtwright, Dorothy Janis and Nelson McDowell.

Previewed at the Ritz Theatre.

## Critical Viewpoint:

Magnificent scenery and backgrounds do much to lift this out of the ordinary rut of Western films. The story also holds more than the average amount of interest for a picture of this type, although certain portions of it are so overdrawn that the film will be unconvincing even to patrons who are usually susceptible to slam-bang westerns.

There is, for instance, an episode wherein a huge bear is about to attack an Indian girl—the bear appears to be about 8 feet tall and 400 pounds in weight. Fred Thomson, playing the role of Kit Carson, arrives on the scene. He had a gun and could have easily shot the bear. Yet for some inexplicable reason he rushed in and stages a wrestling act with old bruin—an animal so huge and powerful that it would have probably quickly crushed him to death. But, of course, Thomson kills the bear. This episode is so far-fetched that it actually brought a laugh from the preview audience.

It is also open to question whether it is good judgment to show the negro comedy-relief officially made chief of an important Indian tribe. Indian tribal customs are very strict, especially in regard to fighting chieftans, and it seems incredible that they would make an unknown negro head of their tribe for no apparent reason. As a comedy gag it has a certain amount of merit, but as now staged it is out of keeping with the remainder of the picture, which presents the Indian scenes in a very realistic and authentic manner. In fact, the episodes dealing with the various redskin tribes are unusually well done and among the best in the film.

Another event in "Kit Carson" which is going to be a hard

pill for the average patron to swallow is one wherein an Indian girl is shown falling from a precipice several hundred feet high. She lands with a terrific thud on hard ground, or rock, and it would seem that she must be instantly killed. Yet when Kit Carson arrived on the scene she is not only conscious—but she moves her head, shoulders and arms about in such a manner that it appears that she has not even broken a bone.

These faults, as well as a few others, can be remedied with re-editing, although from past experiences I have observed that film producers are prone to send their pictures forth without fixing up many of the bad spots.

## Box Office Angle:

As a program western, "Kit Carson" is to be rated above the general run and should please the average patron, if properly re-edited. If Paramount attempts to offer this as a special, or at higher prices, it will not make the grade. The film carries good production values but is not strong enough to warrant a jack-up in rental prices.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

## Film "Charm School"

"The Charm School," produced several years ago with Wallace Reid in the starring role, will be re-filmed again by Paramount.

\* \* \*

## In Creelman Story

Mary Philbin will play the leading feminine role opposite Conrad Veidt in "The Play Goes On," an original story by James Ashmore Creelman.

\* \* \*

## Elsie Bartlett Signed

Elise Bartlett has been signed for a role in Universal's screen production of "Show Boat."

**"NONE BUT THE BRAVE"**

A Fox picture.

Directed by Albert Ray, from an original story by James Gruen and Fred Stanley.

Scenario by Frances Agnew.

Cast includes Charles Moryon, Sally Phipps, and J. Farrell McDonald.

## Critical Viewpoint:

Although this production cannot be classed as an imitation, the general idea of the picture is somewhat along the lines of the William Haines' formula. It deals with a bombastic youth, brimming with over-confidence, who gets himself into a series of mixups and then manages to pull himself out again.

Several amusing gags and situations have been evolved which, if not hilarious, are at least diverting enough to bring a goodly number of chuckles and laughs from the audience.

The chief trouble with "None But the Brave" is that it contains far too much material—as previewed it is drawn out and long-winded. Several of the less important sequences will have to be weeded out and the rest of the action boiled down to a more effective length.

As the story now stands it is rather incoherent and hard to follow. It wanders hither and yon without getting anywhere. There are also several climaxes—or what appear to be climaxes—for the film continues to unwind several times after the spectator has reached for his hat.

One of the major situations in the last reel should be settled on as the climax of the story and the preceding scenes built up to it in a more forceful manner. This would give more punch to the story and the ending would carry more power instead of petering out.

Charles Morton is as yet not quite sure of himself in this Haines' type role, but his personality is pleasing, and his acting satisfactory. Sally Phipps makes a pretty and peppy heroine.

## Box Office Angle:

"None But the Brave" is

light and easy-going entertainment of no particular high spots. The production is more apt to appeal to the younger element than to mature theatre-goers.—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

## Harvey Gates Writing

### New Vitaphone Picture

Harvey Gates has been assigned by Warner Brothers to write a Vitaphone special which will follow his recent work, "The Terror." Both productions are 100% talking pictures, being the fourth for Warner's from Harvey Gates.

\* \* \*

## Title Roach Comedy

"The Boy Friend" is the title of the Hal Roach all-star comedy just completed for M-G-M release.

\* \* \*

## Harrison Ford Signed

Harrison Ford has been signed by Henry Duffy, stage producer, for the leading role in "The Baby Cyclone," to be presented at the El Capitan Theatre.

\* \* \*

## Writers Signed Under

### Byron Supervision

Under the editorship of Harold Byron, the Columbia scenario staff is being augmented. Three new writers have been signed. These writers are Beatrice Van Sonya Levien and Lillie Hayward.

\* \* \*

## Alan Hale With Boyd

Alan Hale will play with William Boyd in "Leathernecks," to be directed by Howard Higgins for P.D.C.

\* \* \*

## Assigned Fox Lead

John Boles has been signed to play the leading male role in "The Woman," to be directed by Irving Cummings at the Fox Films studios.



# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

## "THREE RING MARRIAGE"

A First National picture.

Directed by Marshall Neilan.

Scenario by Harvey Thew.

Cast includes Lloyd Hughes, Mary Astor, Alice White, Lawford Davidson.

### Critical Viewpoint:

This film was a sorry assignment for every one connected with it. In the first place, "Three Ring Marriage" is not the kind of subject that Marshall Neilan is suited to. It was a waste of time and money giving him such an assignment and a foregone conclusion that he would never turn out an impressive film.

Neither is it the type of vehicle in which Mary Astor and Lloyd Hughes should be featured. They are both miscast in western roles such as this production presents them. They neither feel nor look their parts and seem ill at ease. In western cowboy garb they are obviously out of place.

"Three Ring Marriage" is ostensibly a circus picture, but it lacks the color and glamour of the real circus. There are a few good circus shots in the early part of the picture, but tent life only serves as an unimportant background in the rest of the picture. The production as previewed has the appearance of a film that has gone through a lot of doctoring and is still sick. It is jumpy and pointless in many spots.

Two midgits are worked in for comedy relief and furnish a few genuine laughs. Much of their stuff is forced, however, and should be eliminated. Other and varied deletions are also necessary before the film will be ready for general release.

Mary Astor and Lloyd Hughes do the best they can, considering the handicap they are under. Alice White has a role in the picture and is also seen to disadvantage.

### Box Office Angle:

This is a weak one. Exhibitors are advised to pass it up entirely, if possible. If you have already signed to play it, run the picture on a double bill or

bolster it up with a good two-reel comedy and short featurettes. "Three Ring Marriage" is inferior entertainment and will fail to satisfy the average patron.—*Tamar Lane.*

\* \* \*

## Press Agents Put On Griddle

Hollywood press agents are put on the griddle in the current issue of *Variety*. Film publicity men have been coming in for a great deal of adverse criticism of late. Magazine and newspaper editors are beginning to look upon most movie press agents as non-essentials and are making it harder for them to grab free space.

*Variety* says, in part:

"The practice of press agents working under the guise of a columnist or correspondent does not qualify him to render a bona fide service as publicist for any client. While his column or paper is free and open for any notices pertaining to such clients it becomes quite obvious that a continual repetition of the client's name in print is soon detected and becomes disregarded as interesting reading.

"Hollywood is as much overcrowded with self-appointed press agents as it is with actors. As a matter of fact, a number of actors failing in their first endeavor turn to press agency, employing their acting ability in selling themselves to a group of clients, who will pay them to tell the world how great they are.

"The task of acquiring publicity accounts is an easy one, but holding them is the problem.

\* \* \*

### Jack Wise Signed

Jack Wise has been signed for a role in Warner Brothers Vitaphone special, "The Home Towners," under the direction of Bryan Foy.

## "DIAMOND HANDCUFFS"

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer production.

Directed by John P. McCarthy.

Screen story by Willis Goldbeck.

Featuring Conrad Nagel, Eleanor Boardman, Sam Hardy.

### Critical Viewpoint:

This opus is one that M-G-M labored over for months. Many writers worked on the story, yet the production we see is a lot of balderdash. The much touted genius of the M-G-M executives certainly was not exercised when this picture was produced. The story is inconsistent claptrap and the direction is poor. Barring the opening sequence of the diamond mine which was somewhat interesting, the picture moves slowly and ponderously.

The fact that the native girl loved diamonds was established, yet as soon as she got the diamond she craved she apparently sold it. Although it was worth a fortune she always remained poor. The ease with which the men in the film regarded \$20,000 was a little surprising.

The last episode if well directed could have developed pathos and thrills. As it is now shown, it jumps from one situation to another. The idea of the tubercular girl buying the diamond instead of going away to regain her health is a good touch but it missed.

Few pictures that are episodic are successful—unless each narrative is outstanding; the photoplay is sure to be a failure. Audiences generally like to follow the same characters throughout. The episodic style has been successfully used by Marshall Neilan in "Bits of Life" and by Wm. Fox in "While New York Sleeps"—but the stories in these films were out of the ordinary.

The characters in "Diamond Handcuffs" are motion picture people, not flesh and blood. Like puppets in a marionette show who respond when the strings are pulled, so the players in this cinema move to the

will of the writer.

In a small part Conrad Nagel gives a good performance. Sam Hardy is excellent as an underworld leader. It is a surprise to see Eleanor Boardman play a "moll", although she appeared adequate in the role.

### Box Office Angle:

"There is no particular reason Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer should classify this film in "Their Parade of Hits." In the smaller theatres audiences may find it fairly entertaining, but the majority of fans will think it mediocre.

—*Anabel Lane.*

\* \* \*

## Hayakawa to Stage Comeback

Sessue Hayakawa, noted Japanese actor is going to stage a comeback in motion pictures after an absence of over two years. Harry Sebastian has signed a contract with Hayakawa to produce "The Bandit Prince" as a talking motion picture, using technicolor for many of the important sequences.

"The Bandit Prince" is from the pen of Hayakawa himself and has been published as a novel. The action is laid in Manchuria, Paris and England. For over a year Hayakawa has been making films in Europe.

Sebastian produced "Fifth Avenue," "The Prince of Pilsen" and "Rubber Tires" for P.D.C. It is reported that Harry O. Hoyt will direct "The Bandit Prince."

\* \* \*

### Fawcett with Griffith

George Fawcett has been signed for a role in "The Love Song," D. W. Griffith's current production for United Artists.

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# THE FILM MERCURY

*VERITAS VINCIT*



Vol. 8, No. 20  
Sixty Pages

HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1928

*Edited by*  
TAMAR LANE

## Paul Perez

## Titles Dialogue

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VARIETY: "The titles by Paul Perez are sparkling."

N. Y. GRAPHIC: "The titles are great, sheer Broadway jargon. . . fine set of titles."

N. Y. WORLD: "The titles rival anything we have ever seen. . . brilliant humor. More power to you, Mr. Perez."

L. A. TIMES: "The subtitles are new and good, and evoke laughs."

N. Y. DAILY MIRROR: "The title laughs come thick and fast."

FILM MERCURY: "The titles are one continuous laugh, thanks to Paul Perez."

DAILY REVIEW: "Excellent titles . . . Paul Perez is making the greatest headway of all the caption-writers in Hollywood."

SCREEN WORLD: "The titles are the best I have seen in some time."

# **HAROLD SHUMATE**

**ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**  
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# Big Money Ahead for the Screen Writer

Four years ago the Film Mercury took up cudgels in behalf of the Screen Writer. This was the first definite and concerned campaign on the part of any film publication to advance the cause of the scenarist and bring him not only more credit but greater financial remuneration for his efforts.

Previous to this, in a volume entitled "What's Wrong with the Movies?" I had personally championed the Screen Writer and suggested that the advancement of the photoplay depended largely upon the encouragement of the scenarist and the original screen author. I am glad to note that other publications are now coming to the front in favor of the Writer, even if they are a bit tardy about the matter.

The Film Mercury's slogan: "The Day of the Writer is Here," has more than made good during the past year, as has also my prediction that 1928 would see the return to popularity of the original story. During the past twelve months more original manuscripts have been bought by the big studios than at any time since feature length films became the vogue.

The Film Mercury's campaign has also aided in encouraging the studios to pay larger sums of money for original stories, which is a prime necessity if the studios hope to receive any really worth while manuscripts. Writers cannot afford to spend the time and thought upon screen stories that they do on novels and stage plays unless producers are going to offer them fair compensation for their efforts.

The next two or three years are going to witness the Writer making more progress in the film industry than ever before. He is going to receive more money for his weekly labor. His screen plays are going to bring more money from the studios—double and treble what they are bringing today. On another page I give my reasons for making this forecast.

I do not mean to infer that the cause of the Writer should be advanced to the detriment of the director or any other individual in the motion picture profession. The director is a mighty factor in the making or marring of any film production and will always remain so.

The Writer, however, has had his light hidden under a bushel during the past few years. In most cases he has not received his fair share of the credit in connection with successful productions. That day is now passing. The Film Mercury is doing its best to hurry it along.

There is a new era ahead for the Writer.

**—TAMAR LANE.**



# Some Notes On the Movies

As seen by **GEORGE JEAN NATHAN**

In "Art of the Night"

The moving picture will never really find itself until it divorces itself from the drama. Something, of course, the two are bound to have in common, but the pictures presently lean too heavily upon stage drama and two little upon their own possibilities and resources. Again, all contentions to the contrary on the part of champions of the movies are hollow. Many of the innovations attributed to the movies, rendering them distinct from the acted stage drama, have not been innovations at all, but simply borrowings from the theatre. Griffith's so-called inventions, hailed some years ago as marking a new era of originality and progress in filmdom, were actually mere bald steals from the theatre. His much-talked-of device of fade-outs was originated and used years before by William Gillette in the plays he wrote, staged and acted the leading parts in. His flashbacks were nothing more than the old Drury Lane and Hanlon transparent backdrop scrims wherein theatregoers of two generations ago used, while the hero or heroine was meditating in front of the grate-fire, to see scenes depicting the hero or heroine's childhood days and other such stage productions as the Lilliputians' "Magic Doll," with the steps of its walker through the forest followed, as some of you will recall, in exactly the same manner as in Griffith's photography. Griffith was an actor; he must have seen and remembered all these stage tricks; and when he became a director he took them over from the theatre with him.

But these are just tricks. The movie's real weakness lies in an attempt to cuckoo the drama's business and in the cuckooing to overlook and neglect what should be its own. The movie can never do the drama's work as effectively as the drama can, any more than dancing, even Pavlowa's, can, for all its try-

ing, interpret music. The two are as intrinsically different as black and white. The movie must tell not the drama's stories in the drama's way, but its own stories in its own way. Now and again, it makes such an effort and the results point to what it may conceivably some day accomplish. "The Last Laugh" and "The Thief of Bagdad" are movie stories; the stage could not handle them; the movie can and does. So in the case of "The Big Parade," at least that part of it that Stallings confected, though certainly not the cheap imitations of stage drama that the director inserted into the script. In the instance of "What Price Glory?", those things in the drama that were finest on the stage are worst in the film, while those that could not, because of the limitations of the stage, be shown in the acted play, are the best.

The moving pictures, I need not say, are simply pantomime with a *compere* in the form of printed titles. Their limitations and possibilities are the limitations and possibilities of pantomime, plus only an elasticity in scenic environment and background and a gift of ocular legerdemain that stage pantomime cannot hope for.

The best movie actors and actresses are expert pantomimists all cameras aside. Thus, Chaplin is a moving picture all by himself before a camera gets in front of him and starts grinding, as anyone is aware who has seen him do his confidential pantomimes of French farce and so on. The dramatic actor, off the stage, is a dog without a tail; without the dramatist he is nothing. But the competent movie actor is a competent movie actor with or without a camera. The camera should therefore be reserved chiefly—in the director's mind—for the externals of the movie story and the story itself be directed solely toward those players who

are valuable pantomime funnels. But what is generally the present system? It is to take the movie story away from the expert pantomimists and give it to the camera, in other words, to convert the camera into a dramatist. Well, the camera is not a dramatist and can never be one, and hence we get the current movie blobs. You can photograph pantomime and you can, further, photograph drama in so far as it is pantomime, but you can't photograph drama of any other kind, that is, and persuade anyone but a half-wit. You can't photograph, with the greatest camera ever invented, metaphysical drama, or the drama that lies in luscious, beautiful, moon-struck words, or the drama of wit, or the drama that emerges from the conflict of ideas. And that is what the movies, though they don't seem to be aware of it, often pathetically try in their simpleton way to do. They foolishly and vainly try to do such things as "Romeo and Juliet," "A Woman of No Importance" and "Peer Gynt," when all the while the world of honest pantomime stands knocking at their door.

\* \* \*

## Rocket Returns With New Plans

The complete conversion of First National studios to talking pictures was announced yesterday by Al Rockett, general and production manager of the organization, who has just returned from a trip to New York, where he conferred with Irving D. Rossheim, president of the organization, and other First National officials.

"Hereafter all First National pictures, with no exceptions, will have dialogue," Rockett stated upon his arrival. Both talking and silent versions of all stories will be made, he said.

## John Gilbert To Quit M-G-M

John Gilbert will sever connections with M-G-M upon the completion of his contract, it was reported this week following the return of Gilbert from New York, where he has been conferring with M-G-M officials.

Gilbert was unable to come to any agreement with M-G-M in regard to a new contract. The star is said to have demanded a big increase in salary, which M-G-M refused to consider.

It is also reported that Gilbert is dickering with Joseph Kennedy in regard to joining F.B.O.

\* \* \*

## Rowland Lee Starts

Rowland V. Lee has started direction of "The Wolf of Wall Street" which stars George Bancroft for Paramount. Featured supporting roles went to Baclanova and Paul Pukas.

\* \* \*

## William Powell Assigned

Owing to the passing of Arnold Kent, whose death came recently as the result of an automobile accident, William Powell has been assigned in his place in "The Four Feathers," Paramount picture, Cooper and Schoedsack directing. Powell portrays Captain French.

\* \* \*

## Warfield in Talkie

David Warfield, following his return from Europe, may sign with Warners to make a series of Vitaphone pictures, it is rumored.

\* \* \*

## Franklin to Direct

Sidney Franklin will direct Lewis Stone in M-G-M's new picture, "Heat," in which Nils Asther and Greta Garbo will play the romantic leads. Franklin is slated to make another picture besides this one before returning to U-A.

\* \* \*

## Fox Buying Theatres

William Fox is reported closing contracts for the purchase of some fifty or more theatres in the greater New York territory.



## ANABEL LANE Says

The sound pictures will give opportunity to the heretofore much abused stage writers who came to Hollywood to write scenarios for the silent drama. Although the playwrights were heralded before their arrival here, they were later criticised and kidded when their photoplays did not make the grade.

The film colony failed to realize that these stage authors were entering another medium—with a new and difficult technique. A virgin field is opened to both stage and screen writers, according to the ability of the individual.

The requirements of the talkies will be the same as the silent—good stories, and that problem will evolve eventually into the original story writer.

The present need will take the form of buying plays and adapting them into dialogue material. As soon as the writers in Hollywood recognize the producers' desire for plays, there will be much hibernating and a harvest of stage vehicles. There is a big opportunity coming for theatrical authors.

Eddie Montagne, editor-in-chief at Universal has just returned from New York. Mr. Montagne said that prices being asked for stage plays are fabulous. He also stated that a new condition is confronting the industry. Where previously the motion picture rights were the only ones necessary to produce a picture, the dramatic privilege (that of using dialogue) is an added expense and a big one.

The solution is the producing of plays by the motion picture organizations. It will be cheaper for the film companies to have their theatrical branch which will present a series of plays, out of which they may find a few suitable screen stories. The profit made, if a play is successful, will be velvet.

A number of picture companies have announced this policy. There is danger in the plan though, and the experi-

## "Show Boat" To Be Talkie

Carl Laemmle and Florenz Ziegfeld have settled all difficulties over the dialogue sequences of "Show Boat," and the picture is to be released as a talkie, it was learned today.

Ziegfeld is the producer of the stage version of the play, now running in New York and refused point-blank at first to consider allowing the lines of the play to be inserted in the film.

Ban against the music has also been lifted, it is said.

\* \* \*

### Marx Brothers Sign

Paramount is reported to have signed the famous Marx Brothers for six pictures, among which will be "Four Cocanuts," their last season's play; and "Animal Crackers," their current success. These will be talkies and will be made at the Paramount studios in the East.

ment may prove very costly—instead of beneficial. Motion picture producers should remember that they are producing plays to get screen material; yet if the play becomes popular they will make many thousands of dollars. Before they rush helter skelter into the theatrical business, m. p. producers should earnestly consider the persons they will place at the helm of the new enterprise. Merely signing a famous stage director is not solving a problem, it is essential the manager knows the wants of the movies.

For some time Famous has used the Frohman Company as its stage representative. "The Patriot," which is a success in the films was a dismal failure in the theatre. "The Grand Duchess and the Waiter" was not a prosperous play, but it proved a fine vehicle for Menjou.

There is an old proverb, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." The possibility of meeting a vital issue may be met if wisdom is used by the film magnates, but the same idea badly handled could become a white elephant.

## Talkies to Bring Radical Changes In Favor of the Writer

The advent of the sound film will bring about many changes in the film industry, some good and some otherwise. One of those who is certain to benefit from the "talkies" is the screen writer.

The reason for this is simple. In the past it has been a difficult matter for the producer, the public or the critic to definitely ascertain exactly what credit is due the writer or scenarist in regard to any certain film. If a photoplay turns out to be a creditable affair there has been no accurate way of knowing what part the writer has played in its success, whether he has created a splendid continuity, whether he is responsible for the fine touches and twists, the subtlety and unusual camera shots, or whether the director should be praised for these achievements. In the past, almost without exception, it has been the custom to credit the director with the responsibility for the success of a film. In many cases, if the true facts were known, the scenarist would have come in for the bouquets.

The director has been winning the glory for the simple reason that much of his work on the film has been evident to the eye. In other words, the director's efforts and talents in connection with the making of a production for the most part are in plain sight. They can be "checked up" on. The efforts and talent of the scenarist, however, are vague and doubtful. Upon viewing the finished film there is no telling where the writer's creative work begins and where it ends. There is no definite way to check up on him. So, to simplify matters the director is usually awarded the laurel wreaths by producer, public and critic alike—because none knows for certain what kind of a manuscript the scenario writer turned in.

The talking picture is going to radically alter this situation. With dialogue films now becoming the vogue it is going to be an easy matter to check up on the writers. Their dialogues will speak for themselves. There will be no confusing the director with their authorship. The director's work will stand out by itself. He will bear much the same relation to the talking picture that the stage director does to the footlight play, although he will play a far more important part.

This new state of affairs is apt to turn things topsy-turvy in the film game when one reflects that in the legitimate drama it is the writer, or playwright, who gets all the credit and the director who gets little or none. The general public is not only ignorant in regard to who directs its footlight plays—it is absolutely indifferent on the subject. In fact, I doubt if even the New York critics could announce off hand the names of the men who staged the various Broadway plays.

In addition, it might be pointed out that it is the playwrights who get the big coin in the spoken drama and the directors who draw the pin money. Something of this nature is bound to happen if talking films succeed in forcing their way into wide popularity. It can safely be predicted right here that when that day arrives the writer of the photoplay dialogues will become more important in the studios and will receive more money for his talents than any other individual connected with the making of the production, including the director. This is not written in the disparagement of the director. I am merely commenting upon a situation which is bound to arise.

The continuity writer is also certain to improve in standing because a new form of scenario will have to be worked out for the "talkies." The present type of continuity is too sketchy and jumpy for dialogue and yet it is not impressive to keep screen characters standing so long in one position, as is now being done in Vitaphone and other sound pictures.

—TAMAR LANE.



# THE FILM PARADE

*As seen by* RICHARD WATTS Jr.

A stranger to the more intimate details of Hollywood picture making, I have always exact status of the writer in this business of cinema manufacture. I hope you will realize, therefore, that the following remarks are not intended as pretentious exhortations to the cinema's literary advisers, but rather as a humble appeal for knowledge from one who longs for photoplay information. Mr. Lane's Writers Number seems as good a time as any for me to ask for advice.

The difficulty in telling just what part an author has played in the success or failure of a film may sound absurd to you in Hollywood who have all the inside information on what is going on, but to us, marooned 3,000 miles from the shrine of our favourite art, it is a very real one. We know that films billed as either written or adapted by Hans Kraly or Benjamin Glazer are likely to be good, that a work attributed to John Monk Saunders will probably deal with romantic heroes who drink toasts to death, and that a picture by-lined by Oliver H. P. Garrett may have something colorful to say about the underworld. That, it must be sadly admitted, is just about the extent of our knowledge of the cinema literatures.

It is not that our experience with these ladies and gentlemen fails to go any further. We know of those delightful vacation junkets to Hollywood conducted from time to time by Mr. Manackiewicz and we listen with increasing boredom to the squawks of the returned playwrights who haven't seemed to fare so well in the Californian climate. Being bright fellows, we realize the importance of the director in either making or destroying a story, and we are not altogether in the dark about the usually baleful influence of box officer,

supervisors, censorship, studio politics, titling and the cutting room. All of this has tended considerably to lower in our eyes the importance of the author. There has been, however, a more basic reason for my own tendency to be less concerned with the problems of the screen writer than possibly I should be. A writer, it should hardly astonish you to be reminded, is one who deals with words and employs them for the particular purposes of narrative, characterization, description, exposition or criticism. He remains, though, essentially a practitioner of word juggling.

Yet, in the past at least, the cinema has been the negation of words. It approached most completely its ideal when it did without them even in sub-titles, and its chief problem and most complete justification lay in the substitution of the visual for the verbal. The films might interest the plot expert, but they could hardly be a satisfactory outlet for the creative urge of the true writer. They made his position entirely subordinate to that of the practitioner of every art form, from music to painting, and that is something your first-rate writer would have difficulty in facing.

I am, as I have tried to make clear for many a week, no friend of the talking pictures. I do, however, realize that the new cinema method is bound to raise the Hollywood writer from his former obscurity. At last he has a chance to deal with his proper medium of expression and at once he is faced with a challenge. Many observers, it is giving away no secret to reveal, have suspected that the minor position occupied by the Hollywood writers was due, not only to their employment by a medium that had scant respect for the proper tools of their trade, but also to a certain lack of ability in

the men who would yield so complete an allegiance to an alien art form.

Now, however, words have been thrust so vigorously into the cinematic medium as to hurl the visual quality into as utter a subjection as the writers have ever experienced. Whatever else happens to the motion picture, it has at least given the authors a chance and the chief interest at present is in noting what they are going to do with it.

At the beginning the evidence is that they are facing their great opportunity in much of the manner that the hitherto silent actors are meeting their great peril. Neither group seems to realize the value of credibility. The players, I am told, are being so absurd as to study eloquence, which is certain to give them an old-school histrionic quality that will add to the artificiality that, I suspect, is inherent in the mechanism of the audible film. The writers, for that part, instead of going in for the naturalism the actors would profit by, are concerning themselves with equal vigor with the old-school excesses of dialogue that literature and the stage have passed beyond years ago.

In all of the talking films so far revealed in New York the dialogue has been stilted as inept, and as antique as were the plots it embellished. A certain proof, however, that this conversational absurdity may not be the result of an essential incompetence of the writers stranded in Hollywood is indicated in that stimulating film, "Mother Knows Best." The dialogue was pretty bad, but when we looked to see what inept native son was to be blamed for its sins, we found that the author was none other than Eugene Walter, who has contributed more than one good play to the local stage.

It could not be, most of us felt, that Mr. Walter didn't know better, and the suspicion arose that the defects of his works resulted from studio command. Therefore it seemed logical enough to suppose that possibly the lesser known dialogue writers of the other talking films were equally guiltless of the absurd talk they have sponsored. Just as the new method has never yet had any adequate tests in a picture with any degree of intrinsic merit in its dialogue sequences, so, it is possible, the writers have never yet had their chance.

The best thing that can be said of them is that they may have been as handicapped by bad management as they were in the pioneer days of silence. But anyway here they have a chance in a medium that is than hostile to it. Maybe they will show us that they really aren't as lacking in ability as we have always suspected.

\* \* \*

## "College Humor" Series

H. N. Swanson, editor and publisher of College Humor is sponsoring a series of single reels to be made by Duane N. Mowat. This series will tie up all the big football games throughout the country this coming fall. Al Davis, formerly Fox comedy director, is writing the stories and will do the directing. Horace Mowat and Ann Carter will play the leads. They will all be photographed in sound and will have talking throughout.

\* \* \*

## "D. W." to Act

D. W. Griffith is going to have a part in the picture he is now directing for United Artists. D. W. had several voice tests made and decided after viewing and hearing these tests to enact a role in "The Love Song."



## Structure

The increasing value of Scenario—Adaptation and Continuity—in accurately planning the structure of production, and definitely forecasting results, gives opportunity to render greater service to Producer and Director.

# HOWARD ESTABROOK

*Paramount.*

### — SCREEN PLAYS —

#### “FORGOTTEN FACES”

*\$74,629 at Paramount Theatre  
(Capacity—4000)*

#### “DRESSED TO KILL” (Fox)

*\$227,500 in two weeks at Roxy Theatre  
(Capacity—6200)*

#### “SHE GOES TO WAR”

*Inspiration-United Artists  
In Production*

#### “THE FOUR FEATHERS”\*

*Paramount Road Show  
In Production*

#### “THE SHOP-WORN ANGEL”\*

*Paramount Feature  
In Production*

#### “VARSITY”\*

*Paramount Feature  
Ready for Release*

\*Sound and Dialogue Productions

# HOW TO IMPROVE SCENARIOS

By TAMAR LANE

It may be the correct thing for the safety and preservation of the public morale to have the characters of the leading players in movie fiction at all times spotless and above reproach, but I doubt it. It may be giving the Johns and Marys examples of righteousness to emulate after a certain fashion, but if they follow too closely upon the ideals now exemplified upon the silversheet we will fast become a nation of ninnies and nincompoops—which, it might be added, we are fast becoming, anyway. With the heroes and heroines of film stories forced to be perfect at all times, it is no wonder the movie is so drab and wishy-washy. What is needed is more latitude in the characters of the silent drama, more real persons of flesh and blood qualities. Let them have their faults, let them make mistakes, let them even be bad, but in the name of common sense, let them be interesting.

If the movie public can only stand viewing goody-goodies in their plays, then let the public either be educated out of the idea or else let some group of nuts who want the job make special films for these weak-minded numbskulls. It has become so that many screen stars are afraid to portray roles wherein they are called upon to commit some act which is not absolutely ethical and proper in every way. Many actors and actresses who have won their popularity in heroic roles flatly refuse to enact a part which has about it any villainous characteristics.

Much of this antipathy of movie audiences for heroes in bad-man parts exists only in the imagination of the actor who is afraid he will disappoint admirers. The kind of persons who will lose admiration for a player merely because he portrays a role not 100 per cent pure are a small loss to the actor.

After following kinescope maneuvers for a length of time an observer must eventually come to the conclusion that celluloid heroes are monstrosities—not only mentally but physically. In physical make up according to film logic, heroes are composed mostly of arms, some leg matter and a thick skull with apparently nothing in it. The conclusion is reached thus: Out of a count of 2,000 photoplays it was found that in 1,999 of them the hero had been shot, smacked on the head or otherwise unkindly treated (the odd production was made by an amateur producer now out of business). According to the figures, the hero had been injured in the arms 1,178 times, the head 532 times, the legs 288 times and once the villain bit his ear, yet no case is on record of his ever having been hit in any other part of the body. It might also be added that shadow heroes are of the indestructible type; it being practically impossible to mortally injure one no matter how badly or how many times he is shot. Another peculiarity of the film Hector is that he always falls violently to the ground even when obviously shot in the arm, and appears a few scenes later with a bandage around his head.

Villains, on the other hand, are not only decidedly human but at certain times very frail human beings. While they evince certain tough qualities in the earlier parts of the picture, they must be depended upon to develop many vital weaknesses of constitution at the proper moment in the story. It is a very simple matter to kill off the cinema jack-dalton provided one waits until near the close of the play. It is getting increasingly more difficult however to conjure up new and unique ways in which to spectacularly do away with him. Maneuvering him up to the edge of a cliff and then rolling him off for a fall of several hundred feet has always been a very impressive way of doing

the job. Pushing him over a balustrade is another effective method.

The heroine is also a strange creature in the photoplay. At times she stands quietly on the sidelines while the hero is fighting desperately for his life and when a little aid from the fair one would make easy victory certain. This apparently never enters her mind. She stands with the approved posture No. 45 (hands raised to the cheeks, face registering terror) until the battle ends. At other times the heroine is a veritable fighting tigress and easily gains her freedom by knocking into smithereens half a dozen burly ruffians. The rule and dividing line seems to be that whereas a girl may quite properly fight for her own rights it is an unsportsman and unladylike thing to interfere in the brawls of two men.

In the films righteousness must always be rewarded, villainy must be punished and rags are always royal raiment when worn for virtues sake. It makes no difference that the theatregoers in real life know conditions to be often quite the reverse. When spectators cross the threshold of the theatre they must immediately throw aside all knowledge of existing facts learned through personal experiences, and take a ride on the magic carpet to the land of where-everything-is-as-it-should-be.

Then there is the rule that every story must have love and romance in it. Without these no play is considered complete and dire failure is promised the film which has failed to include copious love clutches in its action. Even canine and equestrian stars must have their affairs of the heart when presented on the screen. A wealth of fine story material is being completely rejected merely because it does not contain the usual routine love affair. There have been one or two picture plays that have omitted the amatory episodes. These struck us as being very choice entertainment. In justice to the pro-

ducer it should be stated that the average film does not stand much chance of universal approval unless it follows the tried and true hero and heroine formula. One of the big obstacles placed in the way of a man who tries to make a silent epic minus the cavortings of Cupid is the problem of how to end the blame thing. The approved finale for all successful photoplays is a silhouette of the swain and his lady-love in a beautiful clinch. Without this very necessary demi-tasse the producer is up against it as to the proper way to send the spectators away with the right taste in their mouth.

Another unsatisfactory feature of our film stories is the manner in which it makes an established certainty from the first fade-out of the picture just which character is the hero, which is the scoundrel and which is the lady fair. There is an unmistakable tag on each character which even the most juvenile mind is able to read and anticipate beforehand just what each one will do under any given situation. This does away with much of the necessary element of suspense as the spectator knows in advance who will win the damsel and who will be knocked off. The only question in his mind which develops any suspense at all is in trying to guess just how it is going to be done this time. It would be much more desirable to keep matters in doubt and not reveal the winning characters until late in the story. In this respect the novel surpasses the silent drama, for one of the novelist's most effective tricks is in the building up of two possible heroes or heroines in the tale who share an almost similar cherished spot in the reader's heart, that keeps the latter in a state of vacillation as to which is the more worthy of the two and which will eventually emerge victorious. This element is entirely lacking in screen literature and offers a virgin field for the spicing up of the photoplay.



# Story Moods and Forms

By Iris Barry

One of the distinguishing marks of the film is its unruliness, its power to soar beyond all limits of possibility, to depict the passage of years, to step over oceans and mountain ranges, to double back on itself and show what happened before the action commenced, to interpolate dreams and fantastic sequences. But at the same time all the various elements are made more or less successfully to cohere, if only because there are no actual breaks in a film such as you get in a play—no "acts" or intervals. I know some Continental pictures stick "Act I," "Act II" and so forth, into their pictures, but this is simply a piece of mistaken folly and doesn't count. And on the whole the more successfully a film does cohere, the better. In other words, a film should have form. Though it is difficult at first to see how the best pictures have form, on examination one finds that all satisfying films have one cohesive force which holds the whole in shape. The formless-seeming Chaplin comedies, like *The Gold Rush*, are unified by the "character" of Chaplin—the film is a theme on that character alone. The comedies of Harold Lloyd on the other hand are unified by a gradually accelerated pace: they begin slowly, to end in a riot of fast movement, and it is this, not the rather colourless personality of Lloyd (who functions largely as a metronome) which gives his pictures their peculiar form. I admit that in *College Days* a touch of pathos in the comedian gave the typically mechanical Lloyd a tinge of Chaplinism; but his picture was still a theme on accelerated motion. Other pictures again, *Abraham Lincoln*, *The Lady*, *So Big*, *A Lost Lady* and *Stella Dallas*, take the shape of biography, all the incidents being strung on a life-story. Germany has often used the triptych form, not an ideal method, but one which held the three parts of *Destiny* and *Waxworks* together. Pic-

tures expressive of a mood, like *The Street*, have a better shape. *The Last Laugh* was the development of character, in two contrasted aspects—jocose pride and baffled humiliation, and was further held together by unity of place; the theme being life in a hotel as well as the emotions of an ageing workman. The worst possible unity is a common one: a false emotional crisis or conflict such as one gets in the innumerable American pictures with heroines who have pasts, or are played some rough tricks by circumstances and are too spiritless to fight it. The real *raison d'être* of these pictures is that they give a female star plenty of opportunity for appearing on the screen, and whether she is taking the place of her fallen twin sister, or engaged in secret business which enrages her husband, but is in reality innocence itself, or does unaccountable things to bring happiness to her little daughter, the picture sags and oozes beyond anything that can be called true form.

The unity of space is more often kept in films than one notices: the action often takes place about one building though

not in one room of it. Yet as the camera can catch the building from all sides so that the eye can grasp the identity the effect is of unity. Even the action being confined to one village or street may amount to the same thing if the audience is allowed to grasp the continuity of space over which the action takes place. It is not a convention to be respected overmuch, however. Contrasts of land and water, contrasts of town and country, of open air and indoors, are useful not only to refresh and divert the eyes and to give an impression that the action really takes place in the everyday world we know, but even, too, in bringing out light and shade in character. A good example of this was in *He Who Gets Slapped*, not a first-rate picture, except for one scene, where the hero and heroine steal away from the circus to the woods one spring day and conduct their courtship under the fluttering sun-riddled leaves. The contrast with the sawdust of the circus life was reflected in the changed demeanour of the lovers, much more natural and much shyer under the trees than among their associates and in their

**First Talkie Scenario**  
Joseph Franklin Poland, Universal's feature comedy supervisor, sold the first scenario made into a talking picture to the old Edison-Kinetophone Company in 1914. Poland, at the time, was a free lance story writer and Thomas A. Edison was making his first experiments with sound pictures. "It Happened in the Garden" was the name of this early "talkie."

## Tests Afro-Americans

Al Morris, assistant to Harry Rapf, is in New York to make tests of negro players for the forthcoming King Vidor all-negro (but one) production he is to make for M-G-M. Vidor is now on location.

daily haunts.

Another trick was tried in this picture: that of unifying it by the repeated interpolations of a symbolical clown, on the lines, of course, of Griffith's cradle-rocking woman in *Intolerance*, and repeated again in a smartly made but silly piece, *Time the Comedian*. In *Intolerance* it was justified because it held together vastly different elements, but there was no use for it in *He Who Gets Slapped* or the other picture. It is when film producers start being arty that the worst happens, and this is true of German and American producers alike.

## TITLES and DIALOGUE

By

**JAMES A. STARR**

**"THE LITTLE WILDCAT"**

**"STOLEN KISSES"**

**"ONE STOLEN NIGHT"**

**Warner Bros. Vitaphone Productions**

# Prominent Writers & Their Work

AGNEW, FRANCES  
None But the Brave  
Silk Legs  
Soft Living

AINSLEE, MARION

ALEXANDER, J. GRUBB  
Present affiliation—Universal.  
The Thunderbolt; The Sea Wolf;  
The Road to Divorce; The Lone  
Wolf Returns; The Belle of Broad-  
way; Bigger Than Barnum's; Breed  
of the Sea; Rose of the Tenements;  
Freedom of the Press; Michigan  
Kid; Grease Paint; Come Across;  
Snow Man; Chinese Parrot; The  
Man Who Laughs.  
Foreign Devils

AMY, GEORGE  
Chinatown Charlie  
Home Made  
The Wright Idea

ANDERSON, DORIS  
Half a Bride  
Three Sinners

ANDREWS, DEL  
Present affiliation—Paramount.  
The Racket; Victory.

BAKER, C. GRAHAM  
Present affiliation—Warner Bros.  
The Singing Fool; Conquest; Fancy  
Baggage; The Air Circus.

BAKER, MELVILLE  
Circus Kid

BARREL, DONA  
Certain Young Man

BARROWS, NICK  
Feel My Pulse

BARTHOLOMAE, PHILIP  
Rose of the Golden West

BEEBE, FORD I.  
Mating Call  
Wagon Show

BENNETT, DON  
Present affiliation—Stanley  
Educational.  
Original and continuities for educa-  
tional films of above company; movie  
editor of Science and Invention  
magazine.

BENTHALL, DWINELLE and  
McCOSH, RUFUS  
Present affiliation—Free lance, title  
writers.  
Shepherd of the Hills; Burning  
Daylight; Little Shepherd of King-  
dom Come; Heart to Heart; The  
Whip; The Night Watch; The  
Wrecking Boss.

BENTON, CURTIS  
Life of Reilly  
United States Smith

BERANGER, CLARA  
Almost Human

BERG, HAROLD  
Present affiliation—Free lance lyric  
writer and composer.  
Co-writer of popular hits, Freshie,  
theme song of Harold Lloyd special,

BERNSTEIN, ISADORE  
Rawhide Kid  
Wild West Show

BLACKTON, MARION CONSTANCE  
Becky  
Buttons

BLUMENSTOCK, MORTON  
Present affiliation—Columbia.  
Titled last thirty pictures for Colum-  
bia; wrote "Home James," original  
story for Laura La Plante; also  
"Honeymoon Flats" and "Olympic  
Champion" for Universal.

BOHEM, ENDRE  
Present affiliation—M-G-M.  
Spring Song; The Side Show; The  
Sky Nights; Music of Love; Autumn;  
Byzantine Romance; Captain Claire;  
You and I; Indelible.

BRADBURY, ROBERT N.  
Lightning Speed

BRANCH, HOUSTON  
Present affiliation—Pathe.  
The Showdown; Ladies of the Night  
Club; Once and Forever; Morgan's  
Last Raid; Sioux Blood; Personality;  
The Voice in the Storm; Square  
Shoulders.

BRICE, MONTE  
Present affiliation—Paramount.  
Hot News; The Fleet's In, Someone  
to Love; Tropical Love; The Wolf  
Song.

BUFFINGTON, ADELE  
Present affiliation—Gotham.  
Phantom City; Coney Island; Bare  
Knees; The Chorus Kid; Something  
to Love; The Fire Call; The River  
Woman; Times Square; The Girl  
from Argentine.

BURNS, JESSIE  
No Other Woman

BUTLER, FRANK  
Big Killing

BYRON, PAUL M.  
Hound of Silver Creek

CAMONDINI, ADELE  
Joy Girl

CAMPBELL, JAMES  
One Woman to Another

CANNON, RAYMOND  
Something Always Happens

CARR, HARRY

CHAPPEL, WILL  
Present affiliation—Universal.  
Skinner's Big Idea; Waterfront.  
Wreck of the Hesperus

CLARK, FRANK HOWARD  
Present affiliation—FBO  
King Cowboy; Splitting the Breeze;  
The Texas Tornado; Terror Moun-  
tain; The Avenging Rider; Idaho  
Red; The Bandit's Son; Man in the  
Rough; Come and Get It; The Boy  
Rider; The Little Buckaroo; The  
Bantam Cowboy; The Little Savage;  
The Pinto Kid; Dog Justice; Fury  
of the Wild; The One Man Dog.

CLARK, VERA  
Bachelors Paradise

CLAWSON, ELLIOTT

CLEMENTS, COLIN  
Present affiliation—Free lance.  
Wickedness Preferred; Across the  
Border; two books, All on a Sum-  
mer's Day, The Boy Through the  
Window.

Present affiliation—Pathe.  
Skyscraper; The Cop; Singapore  
Sal; West of Zanzibar; Phantom of  
the Opera; Beast of Berlin; Let 'er  
Go Gallagher; Leathernecks; Celeb-  
rity.

CLIFT, DENNISON  
Bride of the Colorado

CLYMER, JOHN B.  
Present affiliation—Universal.  
Dialogue, Girl on the Barge; It Can  
Be Done; Shakedown; Forbidden  
Love.

COCHRAN, NAN  
Present affiliation—Universal.  
The Girl on the Barge; It Can Be  
Done; Polish Blood; The Husband  
Hunt.

COE, CHARLES FRANCIS  
Me, Gangster

COLDEWEY, ANTHONY  
Present affiliation—Warner Bros.  
Noah's Ark; Glorious Betsy; Women  
They Talk About; etc.



# Prominent Writers & Their Work

**CONDON, CHARLES R.**

Present affiliation—Fox.  
Fog; One Round Hogan; Five- and  
Husbands Are Liars; Caught in the  
Ten-Cent Annie.

**CONKLIN, HAL**

Present affiliation—Free lancing.  
The Strong Man; Arizona Nights;  
The Flying Fool; The Spieler.

**COFFEE, LENORE**

Angel of Broadway

**COHN, ALFRED A.**

Cat and the Canary  
Cohens and Kellys in Paris  
Gorilla  
We Americans  
The Jazz Singer

**CONSELMAN, WILLIAM**

Pajamas

**CORRIGAN, LLOYD**

She's a Sheik  
Swim, Girl, Swim

**COWAN, SADIE**

Stand and Deliver

**COUDERC, PIERRE**

Present affiliation—Free lance.  
Adaptations and comedy writer on  
following Universal features: On  
Your Toes; Silk Stockings; That's  
My Daddy; Stop That Man; Phyllis  
of the Follies; It Can Be Done.

**CRIZER, TOM**

Sporting Goods

**CUMMINGS, DWIGHT****CUNNINGHAM, JACK**

Present affiliation—Technicolor Mo-  
tion Picture Corp.  
White Shadows in the South Seas;  
The Iron Mask; The Thrall of Leif  
the Lucky.

**D'ARRAST, H. A.**

Magnificent Flirt

**DARLING, SCOTT**

Topsy and Eva

**DAVIS, DONALD**

Two Flaming Youths

**DAZEY, FRANK**

Spring Fever

**LIMUR, JEAN DE**

Legion of the Condemned  
Three Sinners

**DEL RUTH, HAMPTON**

Naughty

**DELROY, A. M.**

Present affiliation—Free lancing.  
Silent Men and The Big Moment,  
original stories recently sold to Co-  
lumbia; at present working on Big  
Timber.

**DICKINSON, WEED**

Present affiliation—Fox.  
Her Honor the Governor; The  
Hustlers.

**DICKEY, BASIL**

Border Cavalier  
Call of the Heart  
Fearless Rider  
Quick Trigger  
Wolf's Trail

**DILTZ, JOHN**

Out All Night

**DITMAR, HARRY**

Stormy Waters

**DIX, BEULAH MARIE**

Leopard Lady

**DONOVAN, FRANK P.**

Present affiliation—Directing short  
story film classics.  
Scenarist-director, The Necklace;  
The District Doctor; Girl with the  
Golden Eyes; Casonova; Piece of  
String; One Autumn Night; The  
Dream-Woman; The Accursed  
House; The Raven; Redemption.

**DOHERTY, ETHEL**

Fifty-Fifty Girl  
Figures Don't Lie  
Honeymoon Hate  
Showdown

**DOTY, DOUGLAS**

Dress Parade  
Tenth Avenue

**DOYLE, RAY**

White Shadows in the South Seas

**DROMGOLD, GEORGE**

Celebrity  
Hold 'em Yale  
Ragtime

**DUCEY, LILIAN**

Present affiliation—Free lance.  
The Devil's Apple Tree; The Warn-  
ing; The Climax; The Family Row;  
titles and editing, The Wedding  
March.

**DUFFY, GEORGE C.**

Crystal Cup  
Her Wild Oat

**DUNN, WINIFRED**

Drop Kick

**EASON, REEVES**

Riding for Fame  
Society Cowboy

**ELMONT, JAY**

Present affiliation—Free lance.  
Original scenarist and titles. Just  
returned after eight years research  
in Far East.

**ESTABROOK, HOWARD**

Present affiliation—Paramount.  
Dressed to Kill; Forgotten Faces;  
Varsity; She Goes to War; The  
Shop-Worn Angel; The Four  
Feathers.

**FARNUM, DOROTHY**

Present affiliation—M-G-M.  
Adrienne Lecouvreur; The Divine  
Woman; The Pagan.

**FARROW, JOHN**

Present affiliation—Paramount.  
Ladies of the Mob; The Woman  
from Moscow; The First Kiss;  
Three Week Ends; Wolf Song.

**FAYE, RANDALL**

Love Hungry  
Very Confidential  
Why Sailors Go Wrong  
Womanwise

**FORNEY, PAULINE**

French Dressing  
Girl from Rio

**FORRESTER, IZZOLA**

Chicken a la King

**FOX, FINIS**

Ramona, Resurrection, Revenge

**FRANCIS, OWEN**

Good Time Charlie

**FRANKLIN, CHESTER**

Detectives

**FULOP, ILONA**

Present affiliation—Universal.  
Good Time Charley, Warner Bros.;  
Spring Shower, Universal.  
FURTHMAN, JULES  
Barbed Wire  
Drag Net  
Way of All Flesh

**GANGELIN, PAUL**

Present affiliation—Pathe.  
The Jazz Age; The Office Scandal;  
Ten Modern Commandments; Rolled  
Stockings; Mysterious Rider; Down  
the Stretch.

**GARDINER, BECKY**

Square Crooks

**GARNETT, TAY**

Celebrity  
Cop  
Power  
Skyscraper  
Turkish Delight  
Wise Wife

# Prominent Writers & Their Work

**GATES, HARVEY**

Pay as You Enter  
Terror  
Redeeming Sin  
Brass Knuckles  
Across the Atlantic  
Rinty of the Desert  
Midnight Taxi

**GERAGHTY, TOM**

Big Noise  
Harold Teen  
Mad Hour  
Now We're in the Air  
Wife Savers

**GLAZER, BENJAMIN**

Beggars of Life  
Happiness Ahead  
Love Mart  
Seventh Heaven  
Trail of '98

**GLIESE, ROCHUS**

Main Event

**GOLDBECK, WILLIS**

Enemy

**GOODRICH, JOHN**

Last Command  
Shanghai Bound

**GORDON, GLADYS**

Wilful Youth  
Golden Shackles  
Girl He Didn't Buy

**GRAHAM, GARRETT**

Present affiliation—Free lance title writer.  
The Wheel of Chance; The Noose; The Yellow Lily; The Sunset Legion; The Pioneer Scout; The Farmer's Daughter; The Girl-Shy Cowboy; Taxi 13.

**GRAY, GEORGE ARTHUR**

Present affiliation—Pathe Serial Unit.  
Story and continuity, "The Hawk Story and continuity, The Hawk of the Hills; The Yellow Cameo; The Tiger's Shadow; Queen of the North Woods; story, Crimson Flash; adaptation and continuity, The Terrible People, by Edgar Wallace.

**GREEN, HOWARD J.**

Present affiliation—Free lance.  
See list in last Writer's Number, to which may be added: Vamping Venus (adaptation); The Head Man (continuity); Marked Money (story and continuity).

**GREGOR, ARTHUR**

Present affiliation—Free lance.  
Count of Luxembourg; Say It With Diamonds; Tijuana Rose; Phyllis of the Follies; Scarlet Dove; Love a la Carte.

**GREY, JOHNNIE**

Present affiliation—Johnny Hines—C. C. Burr.  
Honeymoon; The Wright Idea; Chinatown Charlie; Red Mill; Rookies; Understanding Heart; now working on A Pair of Sixes for Johnny Hines.

**GUIHAN, FRANCES**

Present affiliation—Tiffany-Stahl.  
Now doing continuity for Belle Bennett's forthcoming production.  
Bachelors Paradise  
Burning Up Broadway  
Marry the Girl  
Million for Love  
Pretty Clothes  
Stranded and Undressed

**HARRIS, RAY**

Shanghai Bound  
Sporting Goods

**HEATH, PERCY**

Half a Bride  
Tell It to Sweeney  
Two Flaming Youths

**HEILBRON, ADELAIDE**

Captain Swagger  
Lady Be Good  
No Place to Go

**HERBERT, F. HUGH**

Present affiliation—Paramount.  
Cardboard Lover; Romance; Last of Mrs. Cheney; A Single Man; Noisy Neighbors.

**HERSHEY, BURNETT**

News Parade

**HERZIG, SIG**

Present affiliation—Columbia.  
Three years with Christie and Metropolitan; author of stage play, "Camouflage."

**HILLYER, LAMBERT**

Branded Sombbrero

**HOERL, ARTHUR**

Gypsy of the North  
Inspiration  
A Light in the Window  
Polly of the Movies

**HOLMES, BEN**

Present affiliation—Writer and director of dialogue on Movietone, Fox Film Co.  
The Star Witness; The Ladies Man; Marching On.

**HOSIER, PAUL**

Present affiliation—Free lance.  
The Mysterious Card; Say It With Bullets; Brincadores.

**HOUSTON, NORMAN**

Outcast Souls

**HOWELL, DOROTHY**

Ransom  
Say It with Sables  
Stage Kisses  
Virgin Lips

**HOYT, HARRY**

Count of Ten  
Painting the Town  
Stop That Man  
13 Washington Square  
The Wizard

**HUBBARD, LUCIEN**

Rose Marie

**HUDSON, EARL**

Lady Raffles

**HULL, JOHN C.**

Bushranger

**HYLAND, FRANCES**

Grain of Dust  
House of Scandal  
Women's Wares

**ISAAC, FREDERICK F.**

Present affiliation—Hollywood correspondent to D. C. Thomson & Co.'s publications, Scotland.  
Over 140,000 words of feature stories and "gossip" published and paid for in Great Britain during the last year. Also Hollywood correspondent to Ernest Fredman's Daily Film Renter, London trade daily, etc.

**JACKSON, JOSEPH**

Present affiliation—Warner Bros.  
Vitaphone dialogue and titles for: The Singing Fool; My Man; The Terror; Women They Talk About; The Redeeming Sin.

**JACKSON, MARION**

Gun Gospel  
Shepherd of the Hills  
Upland Rider  
Red Raiders  
Canyon of Adventure

**JEFFERSON, LOUIS V.**

Present affiliation—Inspiration Pictures.  
United Artists for six months; Redeeming Sin."

**JOHNSON, ADRIAN**

Present affiliation—Free lance.  
Lookout Girl; Romance of a Rogue; Stronger Will; Satan and the Woman; Women Who Dare; Bowery Cinderella.

**JOHNSON, AGNES CHRISTINE**

Enemy  
Patsy



# Prominent Writers & Their Work

- JONES, GROVER  
Partners in Crime  
Wife Savers
- JOSEPHSON, JULIEN  
Red Mark
- JUNGMEYER, JACK  
Present affiliation—Pathe.  
Show Folks; Shady Lady; Turn  
Back the Hours; previous to that  
one year at Fox, six months as scen-  
ario editor, rest of period on con-  
tinuities.
- KATTERJOHN, MONTE  
Walking Back
- KELLY, JACK  
Free Lips
- KENT, CROMWELL  
Four Footed Ranger
- KENYON, CHARLES  
Alias the Deacon  
Surrender
- KING, BRADLEY  
Present affiliation—M-G-M.  
Lovelorn; Diamond Handcuffs; Scar-  
let Seas; Weary River.
- KLEIN, PHILIP  
Four Sons
- KOHN, BEN G.  
Code of the Scarlet
- KRALY, HANS  
Quality Street  
Student Prince
- KRUSADA, KARL  
Three Miles Up  
Thunder Riders  
Won in the Clouds
- LANGTON, F. D.  
Present affiliation—Fox.  
Assistant to editor-in-chief.  
The Freshman; If It Wasn't for You I  
Wouldn't Be Crying Now; My Little  
Home.
- LEAHY, AGNES  
Red Hair
- LEE, DONALD  
Doomsday
- LEE, ROWLAND  
Barbed Wire  
Secret Hour  
Loves of an Actress
- LEE, ROBERT N.  
Midnight Madness  
Rough Riders  
Underworld
- LESTER, WILLIAM  
Air Patrol  
Arizona Cyclone  
Desert Dust  
Greased Lightning  
Made to Order Hero  
Put 'em Up  
Straight Shooting
- LEVIEN, SONYA  
Harp in Hock
- LEVINO, ALBERT SHELBY  
Their Hour  
Tragedy of Youth  
Woman Against the World
- LEWIN, ALBERT  
Quality Street  
Spring Fever
- LIPSITZ, HAROLD  
Silver Valley
- LIGHTON, LOUIS  
Wings
- LIPTON, LEW  
Baby Mine
- LOGUE, CHARLES  
Back to God's Country  
Cheating Cheaters  
Galloping Fury  
Heart of a Follies Girl  
Thirteenth Juror
- LONG, LOUISE  
Figures Don't Lie  
Love and Learn  
Sawdust Paradise
- LORD, ROBERT  
Present affiliation—Warner Bros.  
On Trial; The Lion and the Mouse;  
My Man; Women They Talk About;  
If I Were Single; Hard Boiled Rose;  
Detectives; Powder My Back; The  
Greyhound Limited.
- LORING, HOPE  
Get Your Man  
My Best Girl  
Spotlight  
We're All Gamblers  
Wings
- LORN, FRANCES FAITH  
Present affiliation—Truart Pictures.  
12 originals for Sierra Pictures;  
12 two-reel comedies, Mrs. Wallace  
Reid; 1 one-reel comedies for Art-  
Class; 6 two-reel dramas for Tru-  
art; 1 feature for FBO.
- LOVETT, JOSEPHINE  
Annie Laurie  
Our Dancing Daughters  
Road to Romance
- LOWE, EDWARD T., JR.  
Thirteenth Hour  
Little Wildcat  
State Street Sadie  
Beware of Married Men  
Tenderloin
- MCCARTY, HENRY  
Gorilla
- MCCONVILLE, BERNARD  
Texas Steer
- McDERMOTT, JOHN W.  
Present affiliation—Free lance  
writer.  
Author original, The Butterfly;  
Chaser, for Harold Lloyd; We're in  
the Navy Now; Blonde and Brun-  
ette; Evening Clothes; 50-50 Girl;  
Senorita; She's a Sheik; Love and  
Kisses.
- McQUILLAN, ADA  
The Girl He Didn't Buy  
Golden Shackles  
Willful Youth
- MACHSON, JAMES  
Present affiliation—Free lance.  
The Go-Between; Hell's Kitchen;  
The Flying Yankee; Can Can; Sis-  
ters in Sin; The Heart Punch, in  
collaboration with Hal Horne.
- MARION, FRANCIS  
Bringing Up Father  
Cossacks  
Love  
Wind
- MEAGHER, EDWARD  
Present affiliation—Universal.  
The Law's Lash, Pathe (adaptation,  
continuity); Humming Wires, MGM  
(adaptation); The Stool Pigeon, or-  
iginal, now in production by Colum-  
bia.
- MEEHAN, ELIZABETH  
Laugh, Clown, Laugh
- MEREDYTH, BESS  
Present affiliation—M-G-M.  
Stephen Tromholt's Wife; The Mys-  
terious Lady; The Woman of  
Affairs.
- MILLER, ALICE D. G.  
Man Made Woman  
Man, Woman and Sin  
Two Lovers  
Devil Dancer
- MILLER, SETH I.  
Girl in Every Port  
High School Hero  
Two Girls Wanted  
Wolf Fangs

# You Don't Know!

What's

REALLY

going on

in the

Film Industry

unless

you read

## The Film Mercury

**FILMDOM'S  
FOREMOST WEEKLY**

### Will Talkie Trust Be Next?

The sound and talking movie apparatus apparently is controlled by a few, and as such is a monopoly, many claim. With certain mechanical enterprises and electric apparatus concerns controlling the parts and patents there is little or no hope for the outsider to compete with the trust clique, and as a result a great deal of the present unstable condition of the film industry must be attributed to this cause.

In a later article this subject will be dealt with in detail, and an analysis of opinion advanced.

The proposition confronting the industry today is one of consternation and despair. While allowances must be made for the haphazard methods in vogue, nevertheless there does not seem to be a Frederick The Great to lead them from temptation, or anywhere else.

First it was imagined that the talkies required stage actors, the present movie queens and kings were listed as taboo. A little experimenting has disclosed that some stage actors are the worst actors for the canned talkies,

Wesco Has 80 Million 80,000,000 people attend performances in the two hundred and fifteen theatres of the West Coast Theatres, Inc., 1928, according to statistics of the company.

\* \* \*

#### In Bancroft Picture

Harry Fenwick plays in "The Wolf of Wall Street," Rowland V. Lee production at Paramount, in which George Bancroft is starred. Fenwick took a part in M-G-M's "The Belamy Trial."

\* \* \*

#### New Contract

Lothar Mendes, director of the picturization of the stage success, "Interference," has been awarded a new contract, according to an announcement by B. P. Schulberg, general manager of West Coast production for Paramount.

\* \* \*

#### Assist St. Clair

Joe Nadel is assisting director Malcolm St. Clair on "The Canary Murder Case," Paramount production.

and that the regular screen player is superior. The booming theatrical voice of the thespian is too loud, besides too affected.

### ANNOUNCING

## Anatomy of Motion Picture Art

by

**ERIC ELLIOTT**

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**Dresser Fox Contract**

Louise Dresser, featured in Fox's "Mother Knows Best" and veteran of the screen, has been given a long-term contract by Winfield R. Sheehan.

\* \* \*

**Objects to "Racket"**

Paramount's "The Racket" was the subject of a complaint made to the N. Y. State Censor Board by A. Kutz, president of the Far Rockaway Parents Teachers Association, after the film had been shown at Rockaway.

**Casting**

Wellington Scott has been appointed casting director of the Henry King picture, "She Goes to War," now in production at the Tec-Art studios. It is an Inspiration picture, which Edward and Victor Halperin are producing.

\* \* \*

**Warners Sign Lytell**

Bert Lytell has been signed to a long term contract by Warner Brothers. The first picture under this contract will be "On Trial."

**China Rejects British Films for Yankees'**

Shanghai.—According to one of China's leading film importers, 40 European productions, French, German and British, have been shelved because of poor results at the box-office.

He writes: "When we tried to show European pictures at the new Capitol Theatre it was so disheartening that we had to practically cut them out."

"Even though some of these pictures were good, our box-office receipts were less than those for any small American picture we could have shown."

\* \* \*

**Bell Handling 4**

Monta Bell will supervise the making of 4 sound pictures at the Paramount Long Island studios. They are "Gentlemen of the Press," the Ward Moorehouse play; "The Letter" with Jeanne Eagles which Robert Florey will direct; "The Birth of the Blues" with Ed-die Cantor, and the Four Marx Brothers in "Cocoanuts."

**At Paramount**

Brandon Hurst, who recently finished in "Interference," is now working in "The Wolf of Wall Street," which Rowland V. Lee is directing at Paramount.

"The Amazing Vagabond" and "Love in the Desert" have just started at FBO.

\* \* \*

**To Direct All Talkie**

Roy J. Pomeroy, director of sound at the Lasky studio, will direct "Drums of Oude," the famous stage play by Austin Strong, author of "Seventh Heaven," according to announcement. There will be 100 percent spoken dialogue throughout the picture which will contain the natural atmospheric sounds of warfare and tribal life of India.

\* \* \*

**Directing Dance Scenes for Paramount**

Fanchon, of Fanchon and Marco, is directing thirty of her girls in the cabaret scenes for "Three Week-Ends," at Paramount.

*An Important Contribution to Film Literature*

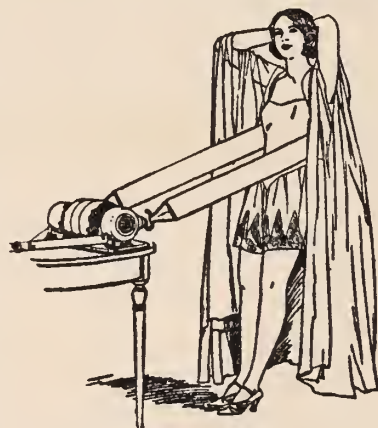
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# **Del Andrews**

Caddo Production

## **“THE RACKET”**

*Directed by*

LEWIS MILESTONE

# Henry Kolker

*Actor, Dramatist and Director*



# Will Film Folk Survive the Talkie Fad?

By Anabel Lane

Faced with a new problem, the producers are in a bewildered state of mind. After thirty years of groping for a celluloid expression, only to have to toss it aside when it is finally in their grasp, is somewhat upsetting. And that is just what the sound pictures have done.

The film barons are in almost the same position as when they entered the canned industry. They have to learn the construction of a photoplay. They have to find out the stars who will prove popular with dialogue. They have to sift for a director who understands both stage and screen.

In this state of confusion, instead of taking an intelligent survey of the situation, the producers have become hysterical. They have signed many theatrical people, for acting, writing,

direction and dramatic teaching. As a frightened child turns to its older sister, the movies looked to the stage when this crisis arrived. Now, sound pictures are an even stranger medium for stage, than they are for film folk. The way out of the fog raised by this innovation is a concerted effort of *motion picture* people to reach a new form of cinema expression. The present one used in sound films will soon give way to a more subtle and finer form, and it will be film workers, not the recently recruited stage workers, who discover it.

This statement does not mean I am antagonistic to stage people. As a matter of fact I am more sympathetic to them than any group of artists, but the feeling is engendered that while they will contribute to the de-

velopment of sound pictures, the actual improvements and formation will come from those who have been engaged in the cinema for many years.

Reports from various studios are to the effect that there is constant friction between theatrical and film people. Each one insists his suggestion is right and backs it with vehement wording. Each one seems to forget he is experimenting with a new idea. The controversy between the stage and screen will prove costly to the producer.

The assertion is not made that the stage people will be less alert and keen than those who have been connected with the movie. It is claimed that a few who have been put in charge of departments are doing fine work. There are some

## Eddie Leonard With Universal

George R. Rogan and Norman L. Sper, newspaper men, who recently sold their original story, "The Minstrel Man" to Universal, are also getting a good break on the casting.

Universal has signed Eddie Leonard, famous minstrel star, to play the lead. Harry Pollard, of "Show Boat" fame, will direct.

The film will have sound effects and dialogue.

\* \* \*

"Dynamite," an original story by Jeannie MacPherson, will be Cecil B. DeMille's first production for M-G-M.

brilliant playwrights in Hollywood who will supply dialogue that is first rate. There will be many actors and actresses who will add grace, charm and ability to the silversheet. In the final survival, though, it is my belief that the picture people will come out on top.

# Charles Kenyon

Just Completed

## "THE PLAY GOES ON"

An Original Screen Play

With Dialogue

for

UNIVERSAL

## **An Analysis Of M-G-M for Next Season**

It is a difficult matter to get anything like a definite line on M-G-M picture prospects for the coming season. I hesitate to predict anything enthusiastic in regard to their product because events of the past year or two have proven that M-G-M is apt to fall down just at the time one expects them to be knocking out hits.

On the other hand, I cannot offer a pessimistic forecast in regard to M-G-M for this season because there is quite a likelihood that their product as a whole is going to show an improvement over last year.

True, two or three of the M-G-M films previewed of late have been ordinary affairs. Others, however, have been up to good entertainment standards or better.

There are indications that M-G-M is losing its former arrogant attitude and is buckling down to business. If M-G-M can whip itself into a harmonious production group where every individual is working for the good of the organization as a whole instead of trying to grab too much personal glory, it is a safe bet that M-G-M will make marked progress with its films and turn out some real pictures.

M-G-M has the stars, the writers and the directors with which to turn the trick. Somehow or other, with only a few exceptions, they have not been getting the most out of their talent, however. M-G-M executives and workers in many cases seem to have been pulling against each other. Each side blames the other, but whatever the cause, it is an unhealthy condition and should be remedied immediately for the good of all concerned.

M-G-M seems to be going strongly after the sound film. Several productions are now in the process of synchronization at the studio. These "soundies" will soon be ready for release and it is safe to assume that M-G-M will click with a fair percentage of them.

As said before, at the present time I would not unreservedly recommend exhibitors to sign up for the M-G-M product. Neither would I recommend against it. The rental prices asked should be the deciding factor with the exhibitor. If M-G-M offers you their product at what you consider a low or moderate rental price, it would probably be advisable to sign the contract. You may rest assured that M-G-M will at least supply you with a fairly decent line of pictures.

If, however, M-G-M demands what you consider high rentals for next season's product, it would be advisable to wait a little longer before signing. The next few weeks will give the film industry a fairly reliable slant on how the various concerns are going to shape up on the season as a whole.

**TAMAR LANE.**



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Adaptation  
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Continuity

Universal's  
**100 Per Cent  
TALKING SPECIAL**

SIR PHILIP GIBBS'

**"A Bargain In the Kremlin"**

ADAPTATION

AND

**SCREEN-PLAY★**

BY

**J. GRUBB ALEXANDER**

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written for the screen, containing Action-  
Continuity and Dialogue.

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Miller  
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Fall

## How Talkies May Cause Foreign Copyright Tangles

Sydney, Australia.—How far can motion picture presentation infringe upon musical comedy and light opera without involving legal action? Nobody seems inclined to answer the question with a test case, and presentation managers are treading lightly.

The film version of "The Student Prince" is due at the Sydney Prince Edward on Friday week, and "The Merry Widow" at the Crystal Palace on Saturday; but neither will be accompanied by a presentation featuring any portion of the stage successes from which they were adapted. Stage rights are held by J. C. Williamson, Ltd.

As far as can be ascertained, neither Union Theatres nor the Prince Edward management applied to J. C. Williamson for permission to use portions of the plays to prelude the pictures, although the Prince Edward has actually booked a male chorus of twenty to sing excerpts from "The Student Prince" score.

As J. C. Williamson is reviving "The Student Prince" at Her Majesty's shortly, any application would have met with a refusal, and the Prince Edward's attitude was not to invite it. Now there will be no prologue, and the male chorus will be used for selections from "Faust." No presentation at all will be put on for "The Merry Widow" at the Crystal Palace, it is stated. In each instance music from the operas will be used by the orchestra.

"The Merry Widow" is regarded by J. C. Williamson as a valuable piece of property for revival purposes.

From the very beginning of motion pictures, J. C. Williamson and the various film firms have been in conflict over stage and screen rights. Williamson acquired ownership of all performing rights to many plays years before pictures were considered. Today stage rights and screen rights are sold separately, but where old-time stage successes are bought for the screen,

modernized and filmed, the original Australian performing rights remain vested in Williamson, and from a copyright department in Melbourne that company watches every title and picture to detect infringements. In the old days infringement was followed by an injunction; today adjustments are negotiated between the firm and the exchange handling the picture.

As far as Australia is concerned, unforeseen difficulties surround talking pictures. The first all-talking picture is "The Lion and the Mouse." The world screen rights are owned by Warner Brothers in America; stage rights for Australia belong to Williamson here. If that picture comes here in "talkie" form, Williamsons are certain to claim infringements of their rights because of the use of the dialogue they purchased when they bought the

## Fitzgibbon Heads Pathe, FBO Sound

S. E. Fitzgibbon, former sales promotion director for FBO, has been named studio manager for Sound Studios, formed by Pathe and FBO to make RCA-Photophone films at the Manhattan studio, New York. Ben Berk has been named production manager, George Wilson, head electrician, Joseph Clement, art director, Jack Tricker, head carpenter, and J. E. W. Seymour, assistant to Robert S. Kant, who heads the company.

\* \* \*

## Edwin Justus Mayer Sells Play to Jed Harris

Jed Harris, New York producer of "Broadway" has purchased a play from Edwin Justus Mayer. It is called "Children of Darkness." It will probably open in October.

play. Adjustment of the rights of the various parties may be a costly process.

## Otto Brower to Direct New Grey Story for P-F-L

A month ago Otto Brower was the man "who got a break." Today he is the man who made good. Because of the uniform excellence of the work he has done since beginning the filming of Zane Grey's "Avant-garde" for Paramount, the former assistant director will also direct the next Zane Grey story, "Sunset Pass." Announcement of Brower's second directorial assignment was made by B. P. Schulberg, general manager of west coast production for Paramount, who gave the ex-assistant his first opportunity.

\* \* \*

## Haines' Next

William Haines' next vehicle will be "The Duke Steps Out," adapted from the Lucien Cary Saturday Evening Post story, with James Cruze directing. Raymond L. Schrock and Madeleine Ruthven are at work on the continuity.

## J. BENSON STAFFORD

### *Original and Distinctive Stories*

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"AMBITION"—*Morality Story (Fantastic Drama)*

"THE RED MOON"—*Hindu Romance*

"SHOW-BOAT SAL"—*Character Study*

"SCARS"—*Child Story*

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### West Coast to Spend \$2,000,000 on Wiring

Installation of sound equipment in theatres will cost West Coast Theatres, Inc., approximately \$2,000,000, and the circuit expects to have 70 per cent of its 120 houses wired by March, 1929. Howard J. Sheehan, vice president, in charge of construction for the company, made this announcement at an executive conference last week in San Francisco.

\* \* \*

### Stafford's "The Sign"

#### Soon To Be Produced

J. Benson Stafford, writer of original stories will take a trip around the world. His original plan to go to New York to confer with William Kroll, composer, on the music for his opera-ballet, "The Red Moon," must be deferred as he has arranged to finish his American Indian romance, "The Sign," which will shortly go into production.

\* \* \*

Ben Parsons, the child actor has been cast for a part in "She Goes to War."

## 47 Suicides in One Jap Film

American cinema audiences will soon see a Tokio film, the last reel of which is clouded by 47 suicides. It is a 20-reel super-film, called "The Forty-seven Ronin," and for a long time turned away crowds at leading theaters in Japan, declares an agent for the Nikkatsu Film Corporation, who has arrived on the coast.

The story, he says, is as typical of early Japanese life as the pioneer scenes of Western films of our own, and tells a dainty story of Oriental devotion. The master of the household having been slain, his 47 faithful retainers avenge his death and then commit hari kari as gracefully as possible in order to join him in the upper realm.

\* \* \*

### Eva Gordon in Walsh Film

Eva Gordon is playing in Raoul Walsh's current production at Fox. This is Miss Gordon's first engagement since her return from Europe.

## Howard Hawks to Direct "Big Time"

Howard Hawks is to direct a dramatic story of the stage, "Big Time," for Fox, according to report, with Philip Klein as supervisor. Ben Markson, formerly with Paramount, is the author of the screen story, and with Walter Woods, Woods, also a former member of the P-F-L writing staff, is working on the adaptation and continuity.

\* \* \*

### Author Here

Walter Coburn, well-known western author is in Hollywood for the winter. Coburn has recently returned from an extensive tour of Canada and the Northwest, gathering material for stories and articles. Interest is being manifested in Mr. Coburn's forthcoming western novel, *Mavericks*, which will be published early this fall by The Century Company.

\* \* \*

### Viola Shore With Paramount

Viola Shore has just signed a three months contract with Paramount.

## Pomeroy Conducts

### Talkie Test for Colleen

Roy J. Pomeroy, director of sound at the Lasky studio, has just made a talkie test of Colleen Moore, petite First National star. During the past three months Pomeroy tested the voices of more film stars than any one else in the industry. In addition to the tests of practically every Paramount star and player, Pomeroy has recorded the voices of Mary Pickford, Harold Lloyd, Norma Shearer, Lupe Velez and Colleen Moore. John McCormick, First National executive and husband of Miss Moore, pronounced Pomeroy's method of voice recording and sound reproduction the finest he had ever heard or seen.

\* \* \*

### Graham Titling Fox Picture

Garrett Graham has been engaged by Fox Studios to title "Husbands Are Liars." This is Raymond Cannon's first picture for Fox, and the sixth Mr. Graham has titled at this studio.

# Jack Cunningham

Just Finished:

*"The Thrall of Leif the Lucky"*

for

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EDWARD SMALL CO.

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production

# PETER MILNE

**{Writer}**

**Management**  
**LICHTIG & ENGLANDER**

# FAITH THOMAS

(Writer)

THAT'S MY DADDY - - *Adaptation* - - - Reginald Denny  
RED HOT SPEED - - - - *Adaptation* - - - Reginald Denny  
SILKS AND SABLES - - *Continuity*

*Now Adapting*

POLISH BLOOD - - - - - To be produced in Europe by  
Universal Pictures



## The Psychology of Audiences

Not only is the crowd more emotional than the individual; it is also more sensuous. It has the lust of the eye and of the ear—the savage's love of gaudy color, the child's love of soothing sound. It is fond of flaring flags and blaring trumpets. Hence the rich-costumed processions of the Elizabethan stage, many years before the use of scenery; and hence, in our own day, the success of pieces like "The Darling of the Gods" and "The Rose of the Rancho." Color, light, and music, artistically blended, will hold the crowd better than the most absorbing story. This is the reason for the vogue of musical comedy, with its pretty girls, and gaudy shifts of scenery and lights, and tricks, tripping melodies and dances.

Both in its sentiments and in its opinions, the crowd is comfortably commonplace. It is, as a crowd, incapable of original thought and of any but inherited emotion. It has no speculation in its eyes. What it feels was felt before the flood; and what it thinks, its fathers thought before it. The most effective moments in the theatre are those that appeal to basic and commonplac emotions—love of woman, love of home, love of country, love of right, anger, jealousy, revenge, ambition, lust and treachery.

So great for centuries has been the inherited influence of the Christian religion that any adequate play whose motive is self-sacrifice is almost certain to succeed. Even when the self-sacrifice is unwise and ignoble, as in the first act of "Frou Frou," the crowd will give it vehement approval. Countless plays have been made upon the man who unselfishly assumes responsibility for another's guilt. The great tragedies have familiar themes—ambition in "Macbeth," jealousy in "Othello," filial ingratitude in "Lear"; there is nothing in these motives that the most unthinking audience could fail to understand. No crowd can resist the fervor of a patriot who goes down scornful before many spears. Show the audience a

flag to die for, or a stalking ghost to be avenged, or a shred of honor to maintain against agonizing odds, and it will thrill with an enthusiasm as ancient as the human race. Few are the plays that can succeed without the moving force of love, the most familiar of all emotions. These themes do not require that the audience shall think.

But for the speculative, the original, the new, the crowd evinces little favor. If the dramatist holds ideas of religion, or of politics, or of social law, that are in advance of his time, he must keep them to himself or else his plays will fail.

Nimble wits, like Mr. Shaw, who scorn tradition, can attain a popular success only through the crowd's inherent love of fads; they cannot long succeed when they run counter to inherited ideas. The great successful dramatists, like Moliere and Shakespeare, have always thought with the crowd on all essential questions. Their views of religion, of morality, of politics, of law, have been the views of the populace, nothing more. They never raise questions that cannot quickly be answered by the crowd, through the instinct of inherited experience. No mind was ever in the philosophic sense, more commonplace than that of Shakespeare. He had no new ideas. He was never radical, and seldom even progressive. He was a careful, money-making business man, fond of food and drink and out-of-doors and laughter, a patriot, a lover and a gentleman. Greatly did he know things about people; greatly, also, could he write.

The great speculative spirits of the world, those who overturn tradition and discover new ideas, have had minds far different from this. They have not written plays. It is to these men—the philosopher, the essayist, the novelist, the lyric poet—that each of us turns for what is new in thought. But from the dramatist the crowd desires only the old, old thought.—*Palmer's Monthly*.

## "CONQUEST"

Monte Blue  
Lois Wilson  
H. B. Warner  
Tully Marshall  
Edmund Breese

**Direction:** Roy Del Ruth

**Vitaphone Dramatization by**

**C. GRAHAM BAKER**  
WARNER BROTHERS

### Complete Title Job

Dwinelle Benthall and Rufus McCosh have just completed titling "The Crash," Milton Sills' latest vehicle for First National. In this he will be seen as the boss of a wrecking crew.

\* \* \*

### Cast Opposite Monte Blue

Edna Murphy has been cast opposite Monte Blue in "The Greyhound Limited." Others in the cast are Lucy Beaumont, Lew Harvey, Ernie Shields and Grant Withers. Howard Bretherton is director. An Albert S. Howson story.

### Paramount Canadian Earnings Larger

Toronto.—The earnings of the Famous Players Canadian Corporation for the year just closed will, according to reliable observers, be shown substantially higher than for the preceding period. Earnings may be large enough to enable the company to place its junior issue on a regular dividend basis.

The company estimates that through increased attendance, its 130 houses have had an aggregate seating capacity of 42,241.

*Matthess*  
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# Characterization

By DOUGLAS Z. DOTY

Characterization is by far the most important element in creative writing. It is the quality that gives life and direction to fiction. A well-knit plot is wasted if the characters are mere puppets forced through the actions and reactions of your story.

You may invent your plot—it may be largely mechanical in its building—but you cannot invent characters; they must spring from life and your knowledge of life. Each character must be to you a living, breathing creature, whose antecedents, habits and idiosyncrasies are as well known to you as those of your own brother. You must think about them, live with them in imagination, till you are pretty sure how each one would act in a given situation and exactly how one would react to another if brought together in conflict.

Human nature is not always consistent in its reactions, but your delineation of character must be. You may visualize an old man who is crusty in his manner but kindly of heart; this, of course suggests that he would talk one way and act another.

If your characters take complete possession of your imagination, they are likely also to take possession of your story and work it out in a way that is at variance with your original plans. If you have a striking and original climax and your main characters, in conflict, taking the reins in their own hands, run away from the climax as you had planned it—then you have only one of two lines to follow; either let your characters have their own way if it is more consistent with your characterization of them, or else go back and change your characters from the very beginning, so that they will react in a way to bring about the climax you had previously invented.

But as a rule your climax as modified by the inevitable reaction of the characters themselves, growing under your hand, is likely to be more log-

ical, more convincing, and therefore more powerful than the original mechanical arrangement previously invented as a skeleton on which to rear your story structure. In fiction, nothing is immutable but the truth itself; and you must always be ready to throw away a pet situation or idea if it does not work out convincingly and without forcing.

You have this also to consider; characters grow and develop under the pressure and the conflict of life, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse—and the stony-hearted parent may soften and relent in the last page. But to be convincing, this complete "about face" must have been subtly anticipated by little touches, from time to time; so that when your character finally succumbs to tender emotions, it will convince the reader, as he thinks back over the subtle changes in the man's nature, and not seem merely a convenient trick resorted to at the last moment to bring about, mechanically, the solution you desire.

It is much better art not to give a full length portrait of a character, all at once. In real life you come to know a man only by degrees. So with the people of your story; do not tell all you know of a character at once. Reveal his full nature bit by bit, as he meets the various crises in your narrative. Thus, you may show him as kindly, yet at the same time a physical coward, till later a crisis arises which reveals the fact that though he is an easy-going man, disliking a row, he is brave enough when he has to fight. Again he may appear at first to be a hearty, commonplace person, totally devoid of sentiment, till one day you see him pull from a secret drawer a faded photograph or a woman's glove. Then you realize that his cynicism or his unromantic attitude is merely a defensive gesture to hide from others an old wound.

Never tell too much about a character at one time; rather

## Two F. N. Title Changes

Changes have been made in titles of two First National pictures now in production. "Stranded in Paradise" is new title for "Changeling," in which Milton Sills is starred, and "Adoration" takes the place of "30th Day of October," former title of the new Billie Dove production.

\* \* \*

## To Make Two Co-op Films

Washington. — Two films will be produced jointly by Vandel et Delac of France and Ellen-Richter Filgesellschaft of Germany, says a Department of Commerce, M. P. Section despatch. They are "Immorality" and "Black Spy." In Germany they will be distributed by Star-Film and in France by Aubert. Dr. Willy Wolff will direct them.

\* \* \*

Ivan Thomas is serving as assistant director to Meriam Cooper and Ernest Schoedsack on the production of "The Four Feathers" at the Paramount studios.

let the full nature of a man slowly emerge as the story progresses. This is as it is in life; and it serves to keep your reader's interest in that character alive. For the slow unfoldment of character has as much of the interest of suspense as the story-plot itself. And the day is rapidly approaching when psychology will play as important a part as physical action in the building of stories for the screen.

## Zuro, Music Head For FBO, Pathe

Josiah Zuro has been named general music director for FBO and Pathe sound productions, made either at sound studios, New York, or the FBO and Pathe studios, Hollywood.

Zuro has completed Phonograph synchronizations for "King of Kings" for Pathe, and "The Perfect Crime," "Hit of the Show" and "Gang War" for FBO. He is now engaged on Pathe's "Captain Swagger," while FBO's "Taxi 13" and Pathe's "Annapolis" are being scored.

\* \* \*

Harvey Gates has completed the script of "The Desert Song," a Warner Brothers Vitaphone production, which Roy Del Ruth will direct with John Boles in the leading role.

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**"EVANGELINE"**

# The New Scenario Form

After all these years director Pabst had to show us what we should have discovered for ourselves at the beginning, but we were dazzled by the Murnaus and the Lupin Picks who were experimenting with overhead cameras and slow emphasis on things. No wonder we were led astray for the idea was so right. Get away from the stage sets and use things to establish atmosphere. Yes, but moving shots are so long and if they are dull they remain dull, you cannot cut them. All very well in their place, in character studies, in "The Last Laugh," when the director wanted you to follow every movement of the old man because he wanted you to know him; and how could he have better fostered the illusion of intimacy than by keeping you continually in the company of Jannings and allowing you to become a little bored with him?

How long they took to do anything in those early Teutonic dramas. The camera followed the actors upstairs and downstairs, round corners, out into the street. . . .

You see you must not think of three flats and a camera. I agree, but Pabst does it with brisk cutting. That is the art of the screen. The feeling of spac and freedom and the interest held.

This means not only a new technique of direction but a new technique of scenario writing. Today the scenario is but a poor indication of the finished film because it is not split into its proper scenes. A modern scenario contains about four hundred scenes, a totally inadequate number even for the old-fashioned picture. Cross cutting is ignored or else the gentlemen who write the scripts are completely in the dark as to how a film is edited. The scenario of tomorrow will contain every cut. There are, we are told, two thousand cuts in "The Loves of Jeanne Ney." Very well, the new scenario must have two thousand scenes.

It will not be so pleasant to read as the scenario of four hundred scenes, but it will be a scenario.

All this is important because the director must now write his own scenario and cut his own picture. In the past there has been a definite school who held that the director should not cut his own film; as, quite naturally, he is loth to part with what has cost so much time and care and he leaves the film in an unmanageable length. Look at "Greed," or for that matter almost any Stroheim picture. "Moulin Rouge" lasted nearly three hours when it was first presented at the Tivoli. It seems ungracious not to allow a director to show as much of his work as he desires after such travail. The fault lies with the inadequate four hundred scene treatment. The director finds that he cannot "get over" the full import of a situation and devises improvised scenes, but not if the picture is cut in the scenario, and then how much of the picture will be the director's if he does not write the scenario?

The atmosphere conveyed so laboriously by the Lupin Picks is not eliminated by brisk cutting. One has only to mention "The Loves of Jeanne Ney."

Do you remember how many feet of "New Year's Eve" was taken up by close-ups of clocks? Close-ups of inanimate things are rarely interesting and close-ups of clocks are intolerable.

In "The Postmaster," Ivan Moskvin plays the part of a minor government official. . . . Ivan is bloving on his tea. See how prim his room is. One aspidistra (or rather its Russian equivalent) on either side of the window. Hullo, Ivan has stopped blowing on his tea. The villain is running off with his beautiful daughter! Ivan's hair goes grey and he grows a beard and moustache. Now there is only one aspidistra. . . .

Excuse this digression. What I wanted to show was that atmosphere can be conveyed by "things" in the background

without bringing them into close-up. The bottom had fallen out of the old man's life, and the broken symmetry of the aspidistras. Lupin Pick might have rhythmically approached the aspidistras from different angles on a trolley, and then shown the broken fragments of the fallen pot covered with cobwebs. Some hundred feet of aspidistras! How many films could be reduced to reasonable proportions if scenes—as unnecessary if hardly as obviously so—were deleted? How ridiculous to see a carriage draw up outside a door, or somebody step out of a train, how boring to know just how everybody "gets there"! Every visitor is not greeted, in real life, with "Tell me at once my dear, did you come by bus, taxi, train or private car?" Yet film directors imagine that the public has an unquenchable curiosity in this direction. By the way I would like to know how Moskvin in "The Postmaster" ever got to the city with that feeble totter.

I cannot make up my mind what position the mix will occupy in the new scenario. I am certain of one thing that the mix will not be made on the camera. In England where films are turned out to the measurements of Wardour Street, mixes are scarcely ever made in the dark room. Like the moving shot, a series of mixes made on the camera cannot be cut, therefore it must go. Mixes, if they are to stay, must be "chemical mixes," that is mixes made with chemical fades in the printer. In Germany the "chemical mix" is largely employed, but for the less praiseworthy motives. The German director likes to alter, regroup and add to his mixes.

I realise that I have given the impression that I am very bitter about moving shots and mixes, and it is because so many people are still being deceived by them. Some of the critics have treated "The Last Command" as if it was "the Last Word," but the technique is

## Fox Picture

### Opens in London

"Stella Polaris," a new Fox picture, opened a London engagement yesterday at the Plaza theater in Piccadilly Circus. This is none other than "Lost in the Arctic," which recently had a run on Broadway. While the title has been changed for England, the Movietone accompaniment remains the same.

\* \* \*

### Ufa Gets More Theatres

Berlin.—Ufa has acquired a sufficient amount of stock of the leading cinema theaters in the Rhine Provinces, the Residence Theater at Dusseldorf and the Modern Theater at Elderfeld, to make them members of its chain.

\* \* \*

Fanchon, of Fanchon and Marco, directing cabaret sequences in "Three Week-Ends," Clara Bow's current Paramount picture. Fanchon and Marco dancers are working in the scenes.

really anything but modern. The story is told by the subtitles "General D. Loves Russia." A close-up of General D. loving Russia. In the old days it was: "And the Roseate Fingers of Dawn Were Brushed Across the Sky." A long shot of the roseate fingers doing their stuff. Having set the table with sub-titles anyone can show a long string of mixes revealing anxious gentlemen fingering glasses and nervous ladies tearing up handkerchiefs. —Oswell Blakeston, in *Close Up Magazine*.

GEORGE SCARBOROUGH  
CONSULTING DRAMATIST  
STAGE AND SCREEN  
GRANITE 1870



# **HARVEY H. GATES**

**WARNER BROS.**

---

**In Production**

# **THE DESERT SONG**

**ROY DEL RUTH, DIRECTING**

---

**THE FIRST VITAPHONE  
MUSICAL PLAY**

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## 600 Wired; 1,000 By End of Year

Three thousand installations of Western Electric equipment by 1929 are called for in program of Electrical Research Products, J. E. Otterson, president of the company, stated in a luncheon address before the New York Electrical League. Six hundred theaters now are wired, 1,000 will be by the end of the year, and at least 2,000 next year, he said.

There now are over 60 recording equipments installed or ordered and about 30 stages in process of construction and equipment. In addition, about 100 portable recording equipments have been ordered. About 30 are in operation in the United States and abroad. William Fox, Albert Warner, Charles Christie, R. F. Woodhull, David Bernstein and Courtland Smith attended.

\* \* \*

Delight Evans has been advanced to the post of editor for Screenland Magazine.

## Paper Film Projected By Reflection

Paper film, projected by reflected light was demonstrated in New York by the Graves Holding Corp., headed by George B. Graves, executive secretary of Governor Smith of New York. The film for the present, at least, is designed primarily for non-theatrical use. The spools are exposed, the projection mechanism being in a glass enclosed box with a wooden lamphouse. Two 250-ampere lamps, placed in front of the aperture, provide light from projection. The film is printed on but one side, a special invention preventing sprocket tears.

\* \* \*

## Film Guild Sets Premiere

"Mother o' Mine," European production, formerly known by Jacques Feyder, is to have its American premiere in October at the Cameo, New York, sponsored by the Film Arts Guild. Feyder is to come to America this fall to direct for M-G-M.

## 2,958 Theatres Six European Countries

Washington. — Theatres in six European countries, namely, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Netherlands, Portugal and Yugoslavia, total 2,958, states a Dept. of Commerce despatch. Of this total 1,082 are operated daily and 1,876 irregularly. Estimated seating capacity totals 955,530, of which 432,020 seats are in daily use and 532,510 in irregular use.

\* \* \*

## \$1,000,000 Fire

Berlin.—Damage of \$1,000,000 to Germany's largest laboratory at the Ufa studios was caused by fire. Damage to negatives was slight. There was no loss of life.

\* \* \*

Robert Cloy, featured in several Broadway musical shows, has been signed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer for talking pictures.

## Taurog Working On Fox Movietone

Norman Taurog's first Fox-Movietone directorial effort will be a football comedy starring the two vaudeville stars, Bobby Clarke and Paul McCullough. Taurog was recently signed on a long term contract by Winfield Sheehan to make a series of Movietone pictures. The football picture, which goes into immediate production, contains both dialogue and sound effects. Lou Breslow adapted the scenario from an original story and the dialogue has been written by Hugh Herbert.

\* \* \*

## 20,500 U. S. Houses

Washington.—United States has 20,500 of the 50,000 picture houses in the world, according to a Department of Commerce statement. Total of 15,000 features are required annually by these theaters.

\* \* \*

Otto Matiesen has been engaged for the role of Napoleon in "Napoleon's Barber."

# L. G. Rigby

*Management*

**DEMMY LAMSON**

**RUTH COLLIER  
INC.**



# **Anthony Coldewey**

**Adaptation and Continuity**

## **"Noah's Ark"**

*Editor*

### **WARNER BROS.**

**Management**  
**LAMSON, COLLIER, Inc.**

## Cutting Of "Hell's Angels" Speeded Up

The task of cutting and editing "Hell's Angels," the \$2,000,00 Howard Hughes air movie, is proceeding rapidly under direction of Frank Lawrence, film editor-in-chief of the Caddo Company, and present indications are the picture will be completed on schedule by late December or early January.

More than 1,500,000 feet of film has already been shot in connection with the filming of "Hell's Angels," and two companies are on aerial location making additional scenes at San Diego and Oakland, but the cutting staff has been augmented, and there will be no delay in completing the most talked about picture of the year.

Lawrence has just added Eddie Adams, well-known cutter to his staff, giving the veteran film editor the largest staff of celluloid trimmers ever em-

## "Asphalt" for Ufa

Berlin.—Robert Herlth and Walter Rohrig, two of the most successful and experienced architects on the UFA staff, are now preparing the sets for the third Erich Pommer production, "Asphalt," which will be directed at Neubabelsberg by Joe May who directed "Homecoming," also an UFA production.

\* \* \*

## 2 First-Class Tokio Houses

Tokio. — Two first class houses are planned for this city, with a third theater to be renovated into a high class house. The Ginza Gekijo, now under construction, will seat 3,000 and will be the largest house in Tokio.

played on a single picture. Other cutters who are assisting Lawrence include Douglas Biggs, who has been on the picture since it went into production last fall, Perry Hollingsworth, Fay Bunny, Frank Byers, Vic Presbrey and Ruth Hampson.

## 40 London Houses Phonofilm- Equipped

London.—British Phonofilm is being used by British Sound Film Prod., Ltd., and British International Film Distributors, Ltd., states British Talking Pictures, Ltd., distributors of the device. Forty theaters have been equipped with Phonofilm, the firm states.

British International has put sound effects into "After the Verdict," directed by Henrik Galeen and starring Olga Tschechowa, and "The Meistersinger," Ludwig Berger production. The company has made about 100,000 feet of shorts, including sketches with Ernie Lotinga, George Robey and other vaudeville stars.

\* \* \*

Charles Klein's first production for Fox Films which hitherto has carried the titles of "Fog" and "The Case of Mary Brown" now has a third title, "Blindfold."

## Colleen Moore Busy On "Synthetic Sin"

Following a two months' yachting trip, Colleen Moore is back in camera range once more, production having commenced on her new comedy, "Synthetic Sin," at the First National studios. A new leading man will be seen opposite Miss Moore in "Synthetic Sin" in the person of James Ford. Ford was selected by Producer John McCormick in spite of the fact that numerous actors of more prominence were anxious to play opposite Miss Moore in this production. William A. Seiter is directing "Synthetic Sin."

\* \* \*

## Henshaw Buys Three Originals

Dale Hanshaw, head of Hanshaw Pictures, has decided upon three original stories for the first three feature length talking motion pictures he is to produce for use on the Han-a-Phone talking device. They are "The Expensive Sex," "The Eternal Feminine" and "Romance a la Carte."

# Dwinelle Benthall and Rufus McCosh

## TITLES

### Written or Spoken

### To be

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**For**

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**LICHTIG & ENGLANDER**

## New Theatre Subscribers From Everywhere

Park Theatre—Somerset, Penn.  
 Pastime Amusement Co.—Charleston, S. C.  
 A. S. Clatworthy—Minneapolis, Minn.  
 Lyric Theatre—Summit Hill, Pa.  
 Uptown Theatre—Omaha, Neb.  
 Capitol Theatre—New Bedford, Mass.  
 Grand Theatre—Pierre, S. D.  
 Hollywood Theatre—Pittsburgh, Pa.  
 Victor Theatre—McKeesport, Pa.  
 Hippodrome Theatre—Commerce, Tex.  
 Keller's Theatre—North East, Pa.  
 Elk's Theatre—Mahanoy City, Pa.  
 Regent Theatre—Littlestown, Pa.  
 Nu'lua Theatre—Sharon, Pa.  
 Colonial Theatre—Phoenixville, Pa.  
 Palace Theatre—Fredericksburg, Texas  
 Strand Theatre—Helper, Utah.  
 Firemans Opera House—Ellsworth, Wis.  
 Consolidated Theatre—Logan, Utah.  
 Majestic Theatre—Dallas, Oregon.  
 Third St. Theatre—Easton, Pa.  
 Al Ringling Theatre—Baroboo, Wis.  
 Cameo Theatre—Allentown, Pa.  
 Char-Bell Theatre—Rochester, Ind.  
 Majestic Theatre—Stillwater, Minn.  
 Ritz Theatre—Sharpsville, Pa.  
 Bedford Theatre—Bedford, Pa.  
 Pastime Theatre—Portage, Pa.  
 Grand Theatre—McDonald, Pa.  
 Gem Theatre—Frederick, Okla.  
 Star Theatre—Beaver, Utah.  
 Home Theatre—Seville, Ohio.  
 Mystic Theatre—Barrison, Ohio.  
 Liberty Theatre—McKeesport, Pa.  
 Strand Theatre—Moundsville, West Va.  
 Penn Theatre, Conemaugh, Pa.  
 Virginia Theatre—Fairmont, West Va.  
 Rivoli Theatre Co.—Portage, Pa.  
 Strand Theatre—Preston, Minn.  
 Strand Theatre—Scranton, Pa.  
 Fawn Theatre—Ft. Worth, Texas.  
 Lyric Theatre—Idabel, Okla.  
 Palace Theatre—Bryan, Texas.  
 Crystal Theatre—Gilmer, Texas.  
 Plaza Theatre—Kaufman, Texas.  
 Grand Theatre—New London, Wis.  
 Auditorium Theatre—Crockett, Texas.  
 Palace Theatre—Chillioath, Texas.

This is going to be

**A FILM MERCURY YEAR !!**

Editor Film Mercury: Here are some technical errors I observed in "Fazil"—

The girls should wear more clothes, especially a veil is worn which covers them very well.

The roofs of the houses should not be slanted, but should be flat and should be covered with dirt and sticks instead of red tiles.

Fazil's turban and belaro should be Arabian and not Hindu.

The Arabs do not give girls as presents, but do give camels and horses.

In France, Fazil's servant should wear a hat or an Arabian turban, not a Hindu one.

Fazil, when he wears English trousers and riding boots in Arabia, is incorrectly dressed.

Wagons are never used for transportation in the desert.

The Arabian ladies do not veil their faces, as do the Turks and Egyptians.

The Arabs do not have their harems—that is, a group of wives or women in one building. If they have a number of wives, they are kept in separate buildings.

In any harem the ladies do not bob their hair or appear naked.

Fazil's dress is incorrect in his palace.

The Harem attendant should not be dressed in Turkish fashion.

Any intelligent schoolboy or girl knows that Arabian dancers do not dance the Hula Hula.

Fazil's second wife should not cover her face, as she is an Arabian woman.

In some scenes Fazil's dress would be very appropriate for a Spanish bull fight, but not for an Arabian prince.

### TYPES.

As the picture is an Arabian one, the types are not Arabian, but Turkish.

The harem attendants are again Turkish or Persian, which, as the picture has attempted to be Arabian, is incorrect.

All the cast were good types, especially Charles Farrell.

The atmosphere was especially well selected.

The interiors of the houses were all right.

All of Fazil's men were dressed correctly, and very finely. His first wife was dressed correctly in Arabian fashion, and her make-up was excellent.

With highest respects,

ABD AL KATIB.



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# Speaking of Dialogue

Good dialogue is a vital ingredient of successful story construction. There have been many excellent stories without conversation or with very little, and in most of these instances success has resulted in spite of the absence of dialogue and not because of it. There are several reasons for this: The first consideration of the story writer is to portray life truthfully, with a semblance of actuality. It is apparent, therefore, that as soon as he has brought together a group of characters in a definite situation there will be, as in life, an interchange of thought by means of dialogue. In addition to this fundamental law, there is a factor that, while not bearing upon the element of artistry, should be kept in mind. This is the commercial aspect of writing. It is known among publishers and editors that the reading public has a

habit, inconsistent and ill-advised as it may be in some cases, of scanning a page before reading the story. Often, if a page is full of long paragraphs of description and explanation, unbroken by dialogue, the casual buyer is prejudiced against the story. It is important, consequently, that every beginning writer appreciates the value and necessity of conversation, that even though it may be difficult to write, it must be mastered.

In the portrayal of character conversation plays a vital role. The quality of his thoughts, the way he expresses them, all the various mannerisms of speech give invaluable clues to the nature of the person who is speaking and, in many instances, of the person spoken to. A professor of philosophy will not talk like a street sweeper, a high school boy will not talk like his mother and two men in similar

stations of life will have a different method of expressing their ideas. Yet, as obvious as these illustrations are, there are many stories in which all the characters talk alike, in which there is no distinction between the hero and the heroine and the various people who reflect not only their own individualities, but the opinions and character of the author. To be convincing and interesting, to create the illusion of reality, a character must not be anybody, he must be somebody. A character is an entity in himself, shaped by heredity, by environment, and by education. His conversation should reflect these things, as well as his motives, and his mood. For an author to accomplish successfully this end, it is necessary that he choose characters with whom he is familiar.

—Douglas Z. Doty.

## Orman Starts New Radio Talk Series

In response to numerous requests from radio and picture fans that the Thursday afternoon speaker on motion pictures from KFI tell the public how films are made, Felix Orman has begun a new series of talks covering the following general subjects:

1. Motion Picture Production.
2. Motion Picture Direction.
3. Motion Picture Acting.
4. Motion Picture Writing.
5. Motion Picture Photography and Lighting.
6. Motion Picture Comedies.
7. Pictorial News Reels and Short Subjects.

Leading authorities in the various branches of film-making will be quoted.

\* \* \*

## News In Brief

Paramount will film "The Rums of Oude" with sound.

\* \* \*

Luther Reed will supervise the making of "The Fir and the Palm" for Fox.

# "WATERFRONT"

A "First National" Picture

Is

An **ORIGINAL** Story

By

**WILL CHAPPEL and GERTRUDE ORR**

Directed by William Seiter

Starring Jack Mulhall and Dorothy Mackaill

"Here is one of the most refreshing photoplays of the past two or three months."

"'WATERFRONT' at once takes its place as one of the most delightful pictures of the season."

"Exhibitors should hop to it and book this film."

"'WATERFRONT' is comedy-drama of the type the public is forever seeking."

—TAMAR LANE.

# MATT TAYLOR

Writer

FOX STUDIOS

Management

LICHTIG & ENGLANDER

## The Scenario Situation

By DON KING

There is more or less gloom in the writing ranks, due possibly to the rise of the talkies, and the lull in silent drama which in a measure has affected the title writer and scenarist, for nowadays it's "dialogue" that's wanted from studio reports. But a change is coming.

The capable scenario writer of reputation, who may at the present time be inactive or less active than he should be, is due for a spurt and some prosperity from the trend of things. Silent drama with short talkie sequences will be the vogue in a very short time, and good writers will be at a premium.

Short films with voice and sound may survive, especially the news reels. But the writer may not become disheartened, for his day is coming and prosperity with it. The ranks will be thinned out, and the new arrivals who are gaining money and overnight prestige, will go back to song writing again, while the legitimate and trained scenarist will come back to prominence and respect.

Better pictures must be made, and to make better pictures requires better stories and better writers than heretofore. With serious foreign competition facing the American producer of pictures, and England with a fund of story material to choose from for its photoplays, Hollywood has to look to her laurels, for Europeans have ceased to be a joke and will become serious competitors. This augurs well for the scenarist who will get recognition, and lasting recognition if he can deliver the goods.

The unsettled condition of the picture business just now is due to reorganization and possibly a few mergers which are reported coming. When these conditions right them-

selves everything will change, and much of the gloom disappear. That day is not far off, in fact, it is closer than many imagine. So cheer up! The writer is due for a big year and advancement in the film game.

There is a great misapprehension among writers regarding Europe. If those writers are American born citizens, the American writer, due to the English film laws, cannot receive screen recognition or credit for his work.

Sidney Olcott tells of an instance he learned of in London where an American writer was forced to let an English stenographer put her name upon his screen effort in order to comply with the quota laws. The writer must be English, and the story likewise. So that field is barren. At least for the American citizen writer.

The Hollywood scenarist, going to England, and perhaps France or Germany, faces the same situation. There is no credit to be obtained by such a trip, and the trip may prove costly to the uninitiated.

Europe is no gold mine for the American, unless that American is distributing golden dollars. Then it is a gamble. England is for England, and England despises Hollywood, but is willing to utilize the Hollywood scenarist's brain if an English born citizen profits by it. The American can never benefit in England, nor in France or the continent. The moral is, stay in America or be content with the treatment you receive abroad. You have only yourself to blame for whatever happens.

\* \* \*

Lon Chaney has left the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios for a brief fishing trip in the Sierras, near Bishop, Calif.

**ROBERT LORD**  
WRITER

Under Contract to  
WARNER BROTHERS



## Fear Film Union Leader Was Slain

Detroit. — Fear that Max Ruben, secretary of the Motion Picture Operators Union of Detroit was slain by labor racketeers, who abducted him from his office, has been expressed by the police.

Ruben was kidnaped by eight armed men, while a score of office attaches were held at bay with pistols. The labor leader reported to the police last week that he feared he was to be "taken for a ride," but was unable to furnish authorities with the identity of his alleged persecutors.

Ruben had been attending his business during the past week under protection of an armed guard, the police learned, and two of these escorts were with him in the office when the abductors entered and commanded those present to hold up their hands.

\* \* \*

### Going to Africa

Constance Talmadge is going to Africa for her foreign picture, "Venus," the hero of which is supposed to be a member of the French Legion. The picture is being produced by a company in Nice. "Venus" is by one of France's foremost writers.

## Rogell to Make Two for Columbia

That Jack Cohn, in charge of affairs at the Columbia studios is after capable directorial talent available is evidenced by his recent signing of Albert S. Rogell to direct two pictures under his banner.

First National holds Rogell's contract which has yet some time before expiration and it was by an arrangement with them that Cohn secured the services of Rogell.

In an attempt to duplicate on the success of "The Blood Ship," plans are already under way for the making of "Hurricane," starring Hobart Bosworth, which will be Rogell's second production under the two picture agreement with Columbia.

\* \* \*

## "Spite Marriage" New Buster Keaton Play

"Spite Marriage," a drama of backstage life and an actress who married him to "get even" with her leading man, will be Buster Keaton's second comedy under his new Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer contract. Edward Sedgwick, who directed the comedian in "The Cameraman," will again wield the megaphone. Keaton, Sedgwick, and Lew Lipton are now at work on the script.

## "The Air Circus"

Sue Carol  
Arthur Lake  
Dave Rollins  
Charles Delaney  
Heinie Conklin

### Direction:

Howard Hawks  
Lou Seiler

## FOX MOVIE TONE SPECIAL

With Andrew Bennison

Story by

**C. GRAHAM BAKER**

WARNER BROTHERS

Roy Enright is directing "Kid Gloves," which has just gone into production at Warners, Conrad Nagel starring, supported by Clarissa Selwyn, Tom Dugan and Edward Earle.

## Curtis Benton Back From the Hospital

Curtis Benton, well known scenarist, has left the hospital and is now confined to his home for a few days, recuperating. Benton says that the hospital is a great place to get ideas. He is now busy working out a couple of new story ideas.

\* \* \*

## Three for One Split-up Of Paramount Stock Made

Split-up of Paramount stock on a three for one basis was announced yesterday, with approval by the N. Y. Stock Exchange of listing of 2,063,517 shares of common no par. Dividends on this stock are expected to be inaugurated at \$3 at next meeting of the directors, the equivalent to \$9 a share on the issue it replaces. Earning power of the new stock is estimated at \$5 a share. The stock closed yesterday at 48½.

\* \* \*

Broderick O'Farrell, noted stage actor, is playing the navy captain in Ramon Novarro's new Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, "Gold Braid."

# Daniel G. Tomlinson

## WRITER

## FOX STUDIOS

## \$709,032 F. N. Net Profit for Six Months

New York.—First National's net profits were \$709,032 for six months ending last July 30, stated President Irving D. Rossheim yesterday. This compares with \$605,892 for the corresponding period last year. Total operating cost was \$12,427,135.

Commenting on the report, Warren C. Boothby, treasurer, said: "During the six months period we retired \$760,000 of purchase money notes, \$100,000 of first mortgage 6½ per cent gold bonds, and also 760 shares of first preferred Class A stock. The company's surplus for the period showed an increase of \$666,719, bringing the total to \$7,188,155."

\* \* \*

London.—Carlyle Blackwell is featured in "The Wrecker," which Gainsborough has just completed.

## Bancroft, Beery Re-assigned; Two Sound Productions

Because of the decision to put dialogue and sound effects in both "The Wolf of Wall Street" and "Tong War," Paramount has reassigned the star role in the former picture to George Bancroft. Beery returns to "Tong War." Lee will direct the former and William Wellman the latter.

Olga Baclanova and Paul Lukas support Bancroft, while Florence Vidor will be co-featured with Beery in "Tong War."

\* \* \*

## Moffitt Signs With British Company

Jefferson Moffitt has signed a contract to direct three pictures for British International. He sails from New York October 12 and will make interior scenes at the London studio and exteriors on the French Riviera.

Moffitt has been associated with the Mack Sennett forces for the past few months.

## "Dynamite" De Mille Play, To Be "Talkie"

When Cecil B. De Mille starts his first picture under the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer banner on November 1, he will also produce his first venture into the field of talking pictures.

This was disclosed with announcement of his plans for "Dynamite," his forthcoming production, which, it is announced will be a modern drama in which the famous producer-director returns to the type of theme which created the fame of "Male and Female," "Manslaughter" and "Why Change Your Wife?"

The new picture will be De Mille's first ultra-modern story in several years. It will be made twice, once with silent technique for theaters not as yet equipped with speech projection apparatus, and again as a "hundred per cent talking picture."

Jeannie MacPherson is preparing two separate scripts for the two versions that will mark

## Vidor to Film New Play in the South

"Hallelujah," King Vidor's forthcoming Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer production, and the first all-negro film drama in the history of the screen, will be filmed in its original locale. Vidor, with Wanda Tuschick, scenarist, and his staff, has left for Chicago, whence he will visit Southern states to choose locales for the new play of Southern life.

\* \* \*

## Six Companies Start in New York; Two Talkers

Of six companies which filed articles of incorporation at Albany, N. Y., to produce motion pictures, two announced the intention of making talking films. They are First Moviephone Corporation and Biophone Disc Pictures Corporation.

De Mille's entry into the realm of sound on the screen. A notable cast will be selected, and, it is hinted, De Mille will launch a new "discovery" in one of the roles.

# FRANK HOWARD CLARK



original stories and continuities written and produced during the past year and four months.

**Assistant Supervisor**  
**FBO STUDIOS**



### Writ Forbidding Service To Erie (Pa.) Firm

Erie, Pa.—Injunction granted H. E. Hammond of the Lyric against M-G-M and other distributors restraining cutting off of film service, has been continued pending final hearing of the case on a date to be announced. The Court of Common Pleas continued the case when defendants waived testimony at the preliminary hearing. The dispute arose when the exhibitor refused to abide by a decision of the arbitration board.

\* \* \*

Tim McCoy, just back from Glacier National Park, Montana, where two of his pictures, "Humming Wires" and "Sioux Blood" were filmed, is now at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios, working with Nick Grinde, his director, on preparations for his next play, as yet untitled.

\* \* \*

Ray Enright is directing the dialogue sequences on "Stolen Kisses" for Warner Brothers.

### Norman Kerry Returns

Norman Kerry has returned from a three months' vacation in Europe. His contract with Universal has expired and he has signed with Myron Selznick, Felix Young and Frank Joyce.

Selznick, Young and Joyce also have Constance Talmadge under contract and it is likely that Kerry and "Connie" will be signed soon for a series of co-starring pictures for one of the larger production companies, the series to start when Constance returns from Europe.

\* \* \*

### Fawcett's Second Talkie

George Fawcett has completed his second talking picture, "Fancy Baggage," which John Adolph directed for Warners.

\* \* \*

### James in Hospital

Gardner James is confined to a Hollywood hospital, as a result of an operation. He is well on the road to recovery.

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*Directed by*

Fred Newmeyer

Universal

# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

**"MOTHER KNOWS BEST,"** a Wm. Fox production.

Directed by Jack Blystone.

Screen story by Marion Orth.

Featuring Madge Bellamy, Louise Dresser, Barry Norton, Lucien Littlefield and Albert Gran.

*Critical Viewpoint:*

Charles Chaplin in "The Woman of Paris" broke the up-to-then impregnable commandment of the movies, i. e., Thou shalt not show a mother except in a self sacrificing light. As if to chide director Chaplin, an avalanche of pictures glorifying doting or angelic mothers flooded the cinema market. Along comes "Mother Knows Best," refuting us skeptics who thought movie mothers would continue to be "just too good to believe true."

The idea of this photoplay is big—some claim it is Mrs. Janis and Elsie—it smacks of life instead of make-believe people. While the mother is selfish and dominating, she still is a pathetic figure. Although the daughter's is an interesting characterization, it is the mother one remembers.

There is much that is good in the production and much that might be better. The opening sequence is admirable. The dialogue is not an asset, although the imitations and the fact that it is a sound picture will be a draw. The ending does not ring true, especially to those who persist in remembering the mother and daughter about whom the novel is said to be written.

The Madge Bellamy of "Mother Knows Best" is a decided improvement on the actress who used to appear beautiful but blah. Even her imitations surprised, although two were only fair.

Louise Dresser plays with understanding and her stage training proved beneficial on the Movietone. Miss Dresser gives a fine performance. Barry Norton was not too impressive as the hero. The picture is a woman's picture.

*Box Office Angle:*

A good exploitation angle could be gained by making the

expression "Mother Knows Best" popular slang. Re the picture—it should have appeal to almost everyone. While it is not an outstanding cinema, the originality of the plot and its interest should be sufficient to draw the patrons, with or without the Movietone.

—Anabel Lane.

\* \* \*

## Gleason Writes M-G-M Talkies

James Gleason's stage play writing is standing him in good stead in Hollywood.

He has signed a contract to write dialogue at M-G-M for their talking pictures, and his first production will be "Angel Face," with Norma Shearer in the lead. Robert Leonard is the director.

\* \* \*

## Sloman to Direct "Bargain in Kremlin"

Edward Sloman is to direct Universal's filmization of Sir Philip Gibb's Russian story, "The Bargain in Kremlin," which will be Movietoned.

\* \* \*

## Jason Breaks With Universal

Leigh Jason, who has just finished directing two features for Universal, is severing connection with that studio. Jason states that he is not satisfied with the type of material he is being assigned.

\* \* \*

## Frank Lloyd to Direct "Weary River"

Frank Lloyd has been assigned to direct Richard Barthelmess in "Weary River," from a script by Bradley King.

\* \* \*

## Chaplin to Change Leads

Charlie Chaplin is looking for a new leading lady. Merna Kennedy will not play in his forthcoming film, according to latest reports.

**"BEGGARS OF LIFE."**

A Paramount picture.

Directed by Wm. Wellman.

Screen story by Benjamin Glazer.

Featuring Wallace Beery, Richard Arlen, Louise Brooks, Robert Perry and Edgar Washington.

*Critical Viewpoint:*

"Beggars of Life" is destined to be one of the motion pictures that causes controversy. Those who are Jim Tully "fans" will consider the production is not quite as vital as the literary works of the author. Others may think it too realistic for the cinema. Regardless of the pros and cons the picture is outstanding. Its theme is unusual, the adventure into tramp life is novel and thrilling, the direction and acting splendid.

"Beggars of Life" just misses being an epic of hobo life, due no doubt to the ever present subservience to the box-office. The chief objection may be that the film is episodic, but that should not matter if the production in its entirety holds the interest.

William Wellman achieves the difficult task of getting over the spirit of these roamers of life. He again proves he is one of the screen's promising young directors.

Wallace Beery is splendid as the leader, but due to the love and suspense built for the boy and girl, interest centers in the sweethearts.

Louise Brooks is clever and lovely. I have never liked this actress before.

Richard Arlen is one of the manly actors who is building the admiration of critics and fans. Robert Perry and Edgar Washington contribute to the success of the production.

*Box Office Angle:*

Box office results of "Beggars of Life" will vary according to the type of patrons. Some localities will do very well with it, in others will not draw. Advise exhibitors to take a look at

**"ROAD HOUSE,"** a Fox production.

Directed by Richard Rosson.

Scenario by John Stone. Featuring Lionel Barrymore, Marie Alba and Warren Burke.

*Critical Viewpoint:*

The Fox Studio seems to use so little judgment in their program stories as they show worthy selection in their super-productions. "Roadhouse" is the type story that one of the lesser independents might choose.

The film is supposed to point a moral—I am a little unsure just which one, as the idea is a little confusing. The picture attempts to prove the moral guardians of the city, the welfare workers are hypocrites and no good. While it is true they openly preached what they secretly practised—as they were presented in "Roadhouse" they were the only likeable people in the photoplay. Lionel Barrymore's character was inconsistent—a man who works so hard for reform as he did, would be hypocritical and sneaky even in his home life. As the story is worked out, Barrymore becomes the hero instead of the boy. And the boy, instead of being a character who was worth saving, is an incredibly weak idiot who should have been sent to a home for the feeble minded.

The characters and the story were worse than blah. The Fox executives must have been asleep at the switch when this vehicle was selected.

*Box Office Angle:*

Unless the advertising is sensational, there is little reason to believe this production should prove a box office attraction. It is even weak in B-O names.

—Anabel Lane.

this picture and judge for themselves, although the picture is very interesting and this departure from standards should be encouraged.—Anabel Lane.





## **Richard Watts Jr.**

Noted Photoplay Editor of the  
NEW YORK HERALD-TRIBUNE

And one of the foremost film critics in  
America

Is now a regular weekly contributor to

## **The Film Mercury**

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## Yes Sir! The Idea Was Original!

*(Written Under the Influence of Tonic by a Former  
Scenario Writer)*

I use to was be a scenario writer. I wrote originals when I exhausted my supply of library books, or my card was taken up and I couldn't get any more books. But dem wuz the heppy days, as the Greeks said. I use to eat regular at John's, because h trusted me, and with or without kale the hash came just the same. Happy memories!

Well, to make a short story feature length I started taking my brain children over yonder to Poverty Row. It was once respectable—that is, the shoestring producers occasionally paid you some money; even if it wasn't much, you got it. But then Poverty Row started to get swell. You know how it is when people get swell. If you don't what's the matter?

Well, I started bringing my stuff to Poverty Row when it got swell. My stuff was original, as original as anything in Poverty Row. Producers kept my brain figment for a couple weeks and then tell me it had whiskers. Stale as a ten day loaf of bread!

"Do you know, son," says a cigar-smoking Poverty Row producer, "we had the same idea as your story has months ago. We only discovered it just now. Your story refreshed the old memory again. A coincidence ain't it?"

But all the "coincident" producers ain't in Poverty Row. Not by a tin-type! They are all over Hollywood, Culver City and all the other places called cities that are in Los Angeles county, the biggest country in the world, outside of Iowa, and Iowa is in Long Beach. They don't make movies in Long Beach nor write scenarios either. That's why they all eat steadily without getting indigestion.

"What's an idea?" says a producer to me. "You say yours is new. How can you prove it?" I am wondering how I can—are you with me?

"What chance have you got to establish your story is *original*," he says between smoke rings. "Don't you know there are just so many plots in existence, and the movies have used them all. So how can yours be original?" he fires at me. Of course I'm gassed. His cigar was terrible.

"Well," says I, growing rambunctious, "if I brings in me story to you, and you like the twists I give the old idea, isn't that a reason for you buying it, since all the plots and the ideas are old?"

"But we have a scenario department," he says. "They change all the old ideas into new ones. Why buy your stuff?"

And that's that. Beat the game if you can. You may have something good; you may twist the old idea sideways and inside out, and make it different. But sell it. They'll use it. But as far as you are concerned you're in tough luck.

Yep! The business is advancing. The writers will make up someday and get organized. Then they'll advance with the business.

## ADELINE M. ALVORD

Screen stories by well-known authors

## Research

*For Writers and Producers*

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Under Contract to  
WARNER BROTHERS

# GARRETT GRAHAM

## TAMAR LANE

### SOME PRAISE FOR WARNER'S MUSIC

Not a little of the credit for the popularity of Warner Bros. Hollywood Theatre must go to Leo Forbstein, musical director and conductor of the theatre orchestra.

Forbstein's music is about the most satisfying from all-around angles that I have ever heard in a cinema theatre. He handles the classical and better grade music admirably, without overdoing it, and for popular and jazzy tunes Forbstein's aggregation cannot be beaten.

There is a young trombone player in the Warner orchestra who is the best I have ever heard. He alone is worth the price of admission. And just to show that my powers of prediction are not confined to the films I wish to hereby forecast a big future for this young musician, whatever his name may be.

### MONTAGNE RAPS STAGE AUTHORS

Here is some interesting comment from Edward J. Montagne, scenario editor-in-chief of Universal, who has just returned from a trip to New York in the interests of the

company. Montagne condemns the tactics now being used by Eastern stage playwrights.

"Playwrights and authors are once more 'killing the goose that laid the golden egg,'" said Montagne. "With sound rights to their works in demand, these authors are throwing around figures like oil promoters. They are asking in some cases more for sound rights to stories they have already sold to picture companies, than they originally obtained for their stories.

"As for the new plays and books just out, one must have the bankroll of a Rockefeller to talk business with them. This inevitably forces the companies to find some other way of obtaining their ideas for sound pictures. Once more the original author has his big opportunity.

"The original author is not going to be crowded out because of the advent of sound pictures. He is going to have the greatest opportunity of his entire career."

### CAMPAIGN ON FOR KENNEDY UNITS

Co-incident with recent visit to the Coast of Colvin Brown, right-hand man of Joe Kennedy, it is reported about Hollywood that the various Kennedy production units are launching an honest-to-goodness drive to bring the FBO-Pathe programs into the front ranks of the industry this season.

William LeBaron is said to be whipping FBO into an efficient producing organization capable of turning out its product on a very economical basis.

Paul Bern has only recently assumed his post at Pathe and the eyes of the entire picture fraternity are watching his progress. Bern is not only one of the most interesting and widely-read men in the film colony but he is also one of the most popular.

All Hollywood seems to be rooting for Bern to turn the trick.

Ralph Block, who recently returned from New York is also said to be preparing on a new series for Pathe.



# Bradley King

In Production

*"Scarlet Seas"*

Starring Richard Barthelmess

FIRST NATIONAL

In Preparation

*"Weary River"*

Starring Richard Barthelmess

FIRST NATIONAL

## Prominent Writers & Their Work

### MILNE, PETER

Present affiliation—Free lance.  
Head of the Family; Nothing to Wear; Say It With Sables; Way of the Strong; Beware of Blondes; Matinee Idol; Sporting Age; Name the Woman, etc.

### MINTZ, JACK

Present affiliation—Samuel Goldwyn Prods.  
Comedy constructor, Show Girl; Wheel of Chance; Harold Teen; Cream of the Earth; Finders Keepers; The Life of Reilly.

### MINTZ, SAM

Present affiliation—Paramount.  
Warming Up; Number Please?; Fools for Luck; Avalanche; Moran of the Marines; Three Week Ends.

### MITCHELL, BRUCE

Phantom Flyer  
Sky High Saunders

### MIOLLIS, FRANCIS DE

Present affiliation—Universal.  
Story work on Has Anybody Here Seen Kelly, and The Shakedown.

### MORRIS, REGINALD

Ladies Must Dress

### MOORE, LOLA

Clean Up Man

### MORGAN, BYRON

Fair Co-ed  
Smart Set

### MORGAN, GEORGE

Clean Up Man  
Fangs of Destiny  
One Glorious Scrap

### MURDOCK, PERRY H.

Present affiliation—Writing original comedy drama for FBO.  
Original story and continuity, Captain Careless, FBO; original comedy mystery story for FBO as yet untitled; stories and titles, 1928 series comedies for Hutchinson Prod. Corp., Columbia release.

### MYTON, FRED

Hello  
Cheyenne  
Horseman of the Plains

### NATHAN, PERRY

Man Crazy

### NATTEFORD, JOHN J.

Devil's Skipper  
Lingerie  
Nameless Men  
Prowlers of the Sea  
Scarlet Dove  
Streets of Shanghai

### NEITZ, ALVIN

Cheer Leader

### O'DONOHUE, JAMES

Hawk's Nest  
The Moose  
Two Arabian Nights

### O'HARA, GEORGE

Beau Broadway

### ORMAN, FELIX

Present affiliation—Independent.  
The Glorious Adventure; The Beloved Vagabond; Terror, produced in France, starring Pearl White; Moonbeam Magic.

### ORR, GERTRUDE

Present affiliation—Free lancing.  
Waterfront; Mother Machree; Night Life; Her Summer Hero; Loves of Carmen.

### ORTH, MARION

Come to My House  
Hangman's House  
Sharpshooters

### OXFORD, BUCKLEIGH S.

Painted Post

### PAGE, MANN

Chicken a la King

### PARKER, RALPH

Present affiliation—Free lancing.  
Formerly on writing staff of Paramount-Famous-Lasky Corp.

### PEREZ, MARCEL

Out All Night

### PEREZ, PAUL

Present affiliation—Free lance title and dialogue writer.  
One year title writer with M-G-M, assistant to Joe Farnham; titled four for Johnny Hines, two for M-G-M, one for Monty Banks, one for Rod La Rocque, two for Columbia, one for Universal, since free lancing; now at work on ninth successive feature for Tiffany-Stahl; last year was under contract to Sennett, and soon to start writing dialogue for talkies at that studio.

### PICKETT, ELIZABETH

Fleetwing

### PLANNETTE, JEAN

Ragtime

### PLYMPTON, GEORGE

One Glorious Scrap  
Put 'em Up

### PRATT, GILBERT WALKER

Present affiliation—Free lancing.  
Finished adaptation and continuity, The Farmer's Daughter; original for Squad's Right, Tiffany-Stahl; adaptation and continuity off Just Married for Paramount-Lasky; previous to this wrote original with Grover Jones on last two Beery and Hatton pictures for Paramount-Lasky, Partners in Crime and The Big Killing.

### PRICE, ANN

Smart Set

### PRIDE, LEO B.

Present affiliation—Paramount.

### PRINTZLAU, OLGA

Camille  
Fashion Madness

### PYPER, GEORGE W.

Present affiliation—Trem Carr-Ray-art Prods.  
Son of the Golden West; Outlawed; City of Purple Dreams; The Isle of Lost Men; Exodus; The Range Wolf; A Ridin' Fury; Riders of the North; The Fighting Forester.

### QUIRK, JOSEPHINE

Blondes by Choice

### REED, TOM

Present affiliation—Universal.  
Dialogue and titles, The Last Warning, Lonesome; author, East Side, to be filmed as all talkie; titles, Red Lips, Finders Keepers, Stop That Man!, Thanks for the Buggy Ride, Good Morning, Judge, "Out All Night, etc.; now titling The Girl on the Barge, by Rupert Hughes, an Edward Sloman production for Universal.

### RIGBY, L. G.

Valley of the Giants, Turmoil

### RITCHEY, WILL

After the Storm  
A Woman's Way

### ROEBUCK, EARLE

Whip Woman

### ROGAN, GEORGE R.

Present affiliation—Free lancing.  
The Minstrel Man for Universal in collaboration with Norman L. Sper; collaborated on Reginald Denny's Fast and Furious; five original "Collegians" for Universal; The Big Gun.



JACK TOWNLEY

The  
"COHENS AND KELLYS"  
In  
ATLANTIC CITY"

A Universal Special  
Sound Picture

"THE WRIGHT IDEA"

Johnny Hines' Latest  
First National Production

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# Prominent Writers & Their Work

## RUBIN, J. WALTER

Fools for Luck  
Gay Retreat  
Open Range  
Shootin' Irons  
Under the Tonto Rim  
Vanishing Pioneer

## RUTHVEN, MADELINE

Spoilers of the West  
Wyoming

## RYERSON, FLORENCE

Present affiliation—Paramount.  
Love and Learn; Something Always  
Happens; Easy Come, Easy Go;  
Hot News; The Canary Murder  
Case; book of short plays, All on a  
Summer's Day.

## SAGOR, FREDERICA

Farmer's Daughter

## SAUNDERS, JOHN M.

Legion of the Condemned

## SCHAYER, RICARD

Across to Singapore  
Circus Rookies H  
Law of the Range

## SCHIOFIELD, PAUL

The Escape

## SCHROCK, RAYMOND L.

Telling the World  
West Point

## SEARS, ZELDA

Rush Hour  
Wise Wife

## SHELDON, FORREST

Haunted Ship

## SHUMATE, HAROLD

Bare Knees  
Chorus Kid  
San Francisco Nights

## SMITH, HOWARD

Land of the Silver Fox

## SMITH, WALLACE

The Dove  
Two Arabian Nights

## SNELL, EARL

Fourflusher  
On Your Toes  
That's My Daddy

STANLEY, FRED

Rush Hour

## SPER, NORMAN L.

Present affiliation—Free lance.  
The Minstrel Man, original story  
written in collaboration with George  
R. Rogan; also completed adaptation  
for Universal on The Minstrel Man.

## SPRAGUE, CHANDLER

Camille  
Gentleman of Paris  
Street of Sin

## SPRINGER, NORMAN

Present affiliation—Columbia.  
Submarine; Singapore Mutiny; So  
This Is Lovel; The Blood Ship;  
Hurricane.

## STATTER, ARTHUR

Painted Ponies  
Society Cowboy  
Trick of Hearts

## STEVENS, LOUIS

Burning Daylight  
Hell Ship Bronson

## STOCK, LIPTON H.

Out of the Past  
Woman's Law

## STONE, JOHN

Present affiliation—Fox.  
Wiin That Girl; Captain Lash;  
Homesick; Roadhouse; Prep and  
Pep; Subway.

## SUMMERVILLE, GEORGE

Kidding for Fame

## TARSHIS, HAROLD E.

Present affiliation—Universal and  
free lance.  
Titles: Fox 1 year, Universal 2  
years.

## TAYLOR, MATT

Present affiliation—Fox.  
Untitled original story and script for  
Fox; for Cohen-Linow comedy team;  
Red Hot Speed; Cohens and Kellys  
in Atlantic City; Skinner's Big Idea.

## TAYLOR, REX

## THOMAS, FAITH

Present affiliation—Universal.  
That's My Daddy; Silks and Sad-  
dles; Red Hot Speed; Polish Blood;  
Husband Hunt.  
Blonde for a Night  
My Friend from India  
Smile, Brother, Smile  
So This Is Love

## THOMPSON, KEENE

Feel My Pulse  
Tillie's Punctured Romance

## TODD, RUTH

Comrades

## TOMLINSON, DANIEL G.

Present affiliation—Fox.  
The Black Gang;; assistant scenario  
editor.

## TOTMAN, WELLYN

Green Grass Widows

## TOWNE, ELAINE

Out with the Tide

## TOWNE, GENE

Ladies Night in a Turkish Bath

## TYNAN, JAMES J.

Present affiliation—Harry Weber  
Productions.  
The Unknown Soldier; The Over-  
land Limited; Irresistible Lover; The  
Silent Power; His Master's Voice;  
six Sennett comedies; eight Fox  
comedies, Smitty series.

## VADJA, ERNEST

His Tiger Lady  
Serenade

## VAN, BEATRICE

Finders Keepers  
Irresistible Lover  
Silk Stockings  
Thanks for the Buggy Ride

## VAN DYKE, W. S.

Riders of the Dark

## VAN LOAN, H. H.

A Man of Quality

## VIDOR, KING

Show People

## VON KUCZIAN, BARONESS

Woman on Trial

## VON STROHEIM, ERIC

Wedding March

## VORHAUS, BERNARD

No Other Woman

## WAGNER, JOHN

Lady Be Good

## WAGNER, BOB

Ladies of Ease

## WAIN, CONSTANCE EVE

Present affiliation—Universal.  
The Game of Life.

## WALSH, RAOUL

Me, Gangster  
Sadie Thompson

## WERNER, ELSIE

Into No Man's Land

## WEST, ROLAND

The Dove

## WHELAN, TIM

Present affiliation—British & Domin-  
ion Films, London.  
Screen play, My Best Girl; Exit  
Smiling; The Strong Man; Tramp,  
Tramp, Tramp; For Heaven's Sake;  
The Freshman; Hot Water; Girl  
Shy; Why Worry; Safety Last.

## WHITAKER, CHARLES E.

The Nest

## WILLIS, F. MCGREW

Girl in the Pullman

## WILLIS, ROSS B.

Spoilers of the West  
Wyoming

## WILSON, CAREY

American Beauty  
Ben Hur  
Private Life of Helen of Troy

## WOODS, LOTTA

Gauche

## WOODS, WALTER

Night Flyer  
On to Reno

## YOUNG, WALDEMAR

Big City  
London After Midnight  
Trail of '98

## YOUNGER, A. P.

Forbidden Hours  
In Old Kentucky  
Latest from Paris  
While the City Sleeps



## Jim Tully---An Analysis

Jim Tully's play, "Jarne-gan," opening in New York, the picturization of his novel, "Beggars of Life," with his latest book, "Shanty Irish" being published at almost the same time, should indicate the popularity of the author's works, if not the author.

Probably one of the most misunderstood persons in Hollywood, Tully is criticized by the very individuals who become apoplectic if Tully writes frankly about them. It seems to be the privilege of those in the public eye to say anything—no matter how caustic or cruel—about those who write—but unethical, vicious or dastardly for a writer to put what he thinks of others on paper. That is, provided the remarks are not eulogistic. May I here remark that when something gracious kind or complimentary is made, the person about whom it is written takes it as his just due and does not bother himself or herself to thank the writer.

Jim Tully has written uncomplimentary remarks about some film folk, but he has also been very kind to others. And, I believe, truthful regarding his own beliefs.

As a writer, who has helped many aspiring players and directors towards their goal by lavish praise, I can understand Jim Tully's attitude. Most of those to whom I have devoted laudatory space have never thanked me. On the other hand, many whose flaws I have pointed to, have given vent to vitriolic remarks about me. Thus, are we writers taught to comment as we sincerely feel, even if it hurts the recipients of our observations.

Jim Tully is sensitive, moody, kind. A man has a soul who will lie awake nights because his dog is lost, who remembers to put bones outside in case the dog should return hungry. A man who has done the little kindnesses that I know without publicizing them, is not a monster or mean. His pen and his tongue may be caustic at times, but there is a childlike quality in Tully that is charming.

Tully is the greatest observer

of people that I know. He strips them nude of their superficialities—he sees them as they are. Therein seems to be his crime in Hollywood. He is a brilliant analyzer of the motives of humans. From time to time there has been talk that someone else does Tully's writings. That such is not true can be realized after half an hour with the man. And the persons who are credited for his works are inferior writers to Tully, whose articles and novels at times reach brilliance or greatness.

That his writings are not saccharine or panegyrics is true, but that is not sufficient cause for censuring his work. That some do not like him is understandable, but his writings must be judged apart from the man. And I am one who goes on record as believing long after many of the screen luminaries have departed for another shore, that Tully's literary efforts will survive.

—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

### English Obtain Gilda

Gilda Gray has been signed by British International studios for the featured role in "Piccadilly Shiver" which will be put into production immediately.

\* \* \*

First National's "Changlings" company has just returned to the Burbank studios after six weeks on the Hawaiian Islands.

\* \* \*

Two new sound stages at First National are rising rapidly.

\* \* \*

Present plans at Fox call for Director John G. Blystone, Louise Dresser and other players to leave for Italy November 15 to shoot a super film.

In Zion National Park and Cedar City, Utah, Raoul Walsh has been three weeks directing Fox's "In Old Arizona."

\* \* \*

The departmental forces of Paramount have been increased from 1200 to 1500 workers to take care of the production program now under way.

## "Fancy Baggage"

Audrey Ferris  
Wallace MacDonald  
Hallam Cooley  
George Fawcett  
Edmund Breese

*Direction:* John Adolff

Vitaphone Dramatization by

**C. GRAHAM BAKER**  
WARNER BROTHERS

### New Writer Signs

Richard Diggs, another member of Baker's drama class at Yale, has joined Paramount as a writer. His assignment has not been announced.

\* \* \*

Replicas of Australia and Singapore have been faithfully reproduced at the Fox Hills studios where "Captain Lash" is now at work. A fifteen acre set of a Holland Dutch village has also arisen at Fox Hills for "Street Fair."

### Hiers Leaving Again

Walter Hiers, who returned from a 26-weeks' vaudeville tour some time ago, is leaving again, opening in Denver on the Publix circuit.

\* \* \*

The John Barrymore company is now back on the United Artists lot after a location trip into the Canadian Rockies.

\* \* \*

"Spite Marriage," a comedy of backstage life, will be Buster Keaton's next for M-G-M.

## James J. Tynan

SCENARIST

### SMITTY SERIES

SMITTY PRODUCTIONS

HARRY WEBER

## *A Record!*

Over 600 new exhibitor subscriptions have been added to The Film Mercury's theatre list during the past two months.

These subscriptions were sent in direct by the exhibitors---no agents of any kind employed.

Exhibitors now buy and book their product according to Film Mercury reports.



## Tim Whelan

Edwin Meyers, formerly of Universal scenario staff and of the Madan Co., of Calcutta, India, wishes to announce that he has resumed his original name of EZRA MIR.

Present Engagement  
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for the silent and spoken drama*



Experienced in the technical end of sound pictures through production association with producers for DeForest Phonofilms of England.



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# EARLE SNEEL

(1927 Releases)

**"LET IT RAIN"\***

with Douglas MacLean

**"THE DENVER DUDE"\***

with Hoot Gibson

**"THE FOURFLUSHER"**

with George Lewis and Marian Nixon

**"ON YOUR TOES"\***

with Reginald Denny

(1928 Releases)

**"THAT'S MY DADDY"**

with Reginald Denny

**"GOOD MORNING JUDGE"**

with Reginald Denny

**"THE NIGHT BIRD"**

with Reginald Denny

(Ready for Release)

**"IT CAN BE DONE"**

with Glenn Tryon

**"THE COHENS and KELLYS  
in ATLANTIC CITY"**

(In Production)

**"CLEAR THE DECKS"**

with Reginald Denny

Continuity in Collaboration with Gladys Lehman

\*ORIGINALS

# **Louis Stevens**

## *Adaptation and Continuity*

**"Babe Comes Home"**  
**"Hell Ship Bronson"**  
**"Hard Boiled Haggerty"**  
**"Miss Nobody"**  
**"Easy Pickings"**

## *Continuity*

**"Ella Cinders"**



# Great Britain and Sound Films

LONDON.

London's newest theatre, the Piccadilly, has been leased to Warner Brothers for the presentation of the first American talking pictures to be shown in this country. Thus the first in-road made by the "talkies" in Great Britain will not be on the silent film but on the stage. The Piccadilly, thoroughly modern in construction and beautiful in green and gold, was built as a home for musical plays. One musical play was, in fact, shown there, but has since been transferred, and now this advance post of the speaking stage is surrendering to the talking film.

Is this a sign of the times—a shadow cast before by coming events? Will the stage, already injured by the silent picture, be practically extinguished by its audible development? Last week I quoted the opinion of Basil Dean, one of the best and best-known English theatrical producers, that something of this sort might happen. Certainly the London stage has been in a bad way of late. Even importations from New York, which London managers seem on the whole to prefer to the native product, have been failing after runs that might be measured in weeks or even days. Talking pictures, should they intrigue and hold the public fancy, might well accelerate this rake's progress.

And yet—there is nothing here yet of that whole-hearted belief in the future of all-dialogue films that seems to prevail in Hollywood. Not even the talking film concerns themselves seem overly optimistic. This week, for instance, Stewart Sandeman, who besides being a member of Parliament is a director of British Phonofilms, the first talking film company in this country, predicted that for the next few years the real use of the sound film might be classified under the following four heads:

1—News of the day.

2—Effects; the occasional introduction of the human voice and introduction of "noises."

3—Turns, variety and revue sketches, or "star" turns to offer interludes.

4—Music. The incidental music will become part of film production instead of being left to the mercy of the local cinema orchestra. The perfect synchronization will make possible the production of ballets and excerpts from operas.

*An English Opinion*

So much for the talking film men themselves. One of England's foremost screen critics has gone further and asseverated that "America's remarkable stampede over talkies has practically made a present of the film producing industry to Britain. Hollywood, intent on stopping the rot in American cinema box offices, is voluntarily resigning its leadership of the film world, and Hollywood's difficulty is England's opportunity." He advises British producers of silent film to get together, hire or buy a Broadway theatre and thus sell their films to the thousands of American theatres which may never show talkies. There will be, he argues, a shortage throughout the world of non-talking films, and a demand that British producers can supply.

I quote all this without comment, but it is interesting in view of the formation in New York by J. D. Williams of a company designed to give British and foreign silent films an entry into the United States markets. John Maxwell, Chairman of British International, whose pictures will be placed in America through its agency, has co-operated in the forming of the new distributing concern. British International, already the largest producing firm in this country, has just completed a deal whereby it has secured control of First National-Pathe. The control was formerly held by the Lord Beaverbrook, Lord Ashfield, Sir William Jury and Will Evans combine. An important result of this transfer is that British International will from now on make the "quota pictures" required by First

National here.

Thus, the amalgamation and internationalization of English producing and distributing firms—now recognized as a necessary basis for real growth—goes on. British International, which has increased its capital to \$5,000,000 to finance these activities, owns 95 per cent of the share capital of the Sudfilm A. G., one of the two most important film distributing concerns in Germany. It also has a substantial holding in the Pathe Consortium Societe Anonyme, the largest film distributing company in France; control of Sascha Films of Austria, which has subsidiary distributing companies in Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Rumania, and a substantial holding in Cinema-Art Films which will distribute British International products in Australia and New Zealand.—*John MacCormack, in the New York Times.*

\* \* \*

## New P-F-L Stock at 48½

Most of the trading in Paramount-Famous-Lasky Corporation swung over to the new common shares which were issued after the 3 for 1 split. 29,300 shares were traded in opening the first quotation at 49⅞ and closing at 48½. Only 5,300 shares of the old stock were swapped.

\* \* \*

## For Laura La Plante

As soon as Laura La Plante completes her leading feminine role in "Show Boat," Harry Pollard directing for Universal, she will start work in "Little Miss Satan," Wesley Ruggles to direct. It will be about ten days before Pollard completes his picture.

\* \* \*

## H. B. Warner Picture

Sir James Barrie's "Half an Hour" is H. B. Warner's second vehicle for Paramount. It will be an all-talkie, Ruth Chatterton to appear opposite Warner, with Robert Edeson, Ethel Wales and Joyce Coad, William DeMille to direct. Barrie's story was originally written for Maude Adams.

## \$1,000,000 Paid Balaban & Katz

One million dollars is the price received by Balaban & Katz from Warner Brothers for their First National franchise holdings, of which they held about 5,000 shares. Herbert Stern, president of Balaban & Katz arranged the sale for his company.

Some 9,000 additional shares acquired by Warners for First National control were held by Finkelstein & Ruben, E. V. Richards, Robert Lieber, A. H. Blank and the Skouras Bros.

Skouras will have the management of the huge chain of theatres now controlled by Warners, as exclusively predicted in Exhibitors Daily Review on Saturday, September 22.

\* \* \*

## For Mary Alden

Mary Alden has been added to the cast of Charles Rogers' new picture for Paramount, "Someone to Love," which F. Richard Jones is directing.

\* \* \*

## Paul Guertzman Added

Paul Guertzman, European youth recently acquired by Paramount, has been cast in "The Wolf of Wall Street," Bancroft's starring picture, as the office boy.

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*by Ivan Turgenev*

with Jean Girard, Paul Ellis, Victoria Alden, Jack Hopkins, and others.

#### "THE NECKLACE"

*by Guy De Maupassant*

with Jean Girard, Mary Alden, Emil Chautard, Maurice Costello, Jack Hopkins, William Cody, William Strauss and Victoria Alden.

#### "THE GIRL WITH THE GOLDEN EYES"

*by Balzac*

with Jean Girard, Paul Ellis, Victoria Alden, etc.

— One a month —

These classics will fit any program and are made for the lower five and the upper ten—not too "arty" and well produced

— In preparation —

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"A Piece of String," by De Maupassant

"The Love Test" by Chekov

"The Accursed House," by Balzac

"A Wife's Confession," by DeMaupassant

"Nobody's Luggage," by Charles Dickens

"The Raven," by Edgar Allan Poe

"A Cigarette Makers Romance," by F. Marion Crawford

"Peg Woffington," by Charles Reade

"God Sees Truth," by Leo Tolstoi

"Loves Redemption," by Leo Tolstoi (famous as a play)

"The Deserted Village," by Oliver Goldsmith

"The Girl with the Golden Eyes," by Balzac

"One Autumn Night," by Maxim Gorky

"A Desert Passion," by Balzac

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## A Few Thoughts On the Talkies

When one is in the midst of Hollywood's activities one's opinion of the talking film is constantly swaying back and forth like a pendulum. At dinner Chaplin may win you with his sincere argument against combining sound with shadow images and then, the following morning, you may see something that will make you marvel at the improvements made in the voices from the screen. Later you may be influenced by Conrad Veidt's dissertation on the international scope of the silent picture, after which, in the darkness of the projection room, you may discover further signs of the resourcefulness and ingenuity of a producer in the handling of players for audible productions. In the end you may leave the film centre convinced that there will be some startling talking pictures, productions that may even meet with the approval of the Chaplins and the Veidts.

The most improved talking films will probably not be issued for months to come, but, judging by tests made of actors, these dialogue photoplays will be subjects with players well suited in voice and appearance to the characters they will impersonate. The lines will be written and rewritten, not by title writers but by expert dramatists, who will officiate as co-directors.

Winfield R. Sheehan, general manager of the Fox studios, is not joining in the hysteria for sound; he is biding his time in the making of a talking film that will, he believes, throw new light on the potentialities of this medium of entertainment. He said the other day that the talking film would not mean the end of the silent picture and that there will be just as many silent productions made as those with sound. This, he said, is obviously necessary, because out of the 22,000 motion picture theatres in this country only 1,700 will be equipped for sound by the first day of next year.

A good deal of the disappointment in the early talking films, has been due to both the melodramatic nature of the story and the sudden blasts of speech. The producers have learned that there are other sounds to be screened besides voices and that the lines must not come too abruptly from the characters. Now that the novelty of mere synchronization and the hearing of a voice has partly worn off, the directors will probably endeavour to obtain utterances that are spoken in more natural tones and have the lines accompanied by restrained but nevertheless effective actions. For the next month or so the picture makers will be learning, and even the most competent players will have to forget the presence of the microphone when they are talking. As Mr. Lasky explained, these performances in the beginning are in the same state of nervousness before the microphones as they were when they first confronted a camera. This nervousness, Mr. Lasky believed, would soon disappear.

The talking feature will undoubtedly have its place in the scheme of things, provided it is a shrewd mixture of the cinematic values, the spoken lines and other contributory sounds. Picture producers will gradually learn that two men walking along a road do not keep up a steady fire of conversation and that when a character questions another there must be a natural pause before the reply is forthcoming. And so far as the minor sounds are concerned, they should not interfere with the utterance of the character on whom attention may be riveted.—Mordaunt Hall, photoplay editor, *New York Times*.





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(Warner Brothers)

SCENARIST  
**"The Singing Fool"**

With  
**Al Jolson**

Story Prepared Under the  
Personal Supervision  
of

**Edward J. Montagne**

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T H R O U G H O U T**  
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AHEAD IN  
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**VERITAS**



**VINCIT**

Vol. 9 No. 6  
Sixteen Pages

HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA  
FRIDAY, JANUARY 4, 1929

*Edited by*  
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and

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*Directed by*  
**PAUL L. STEIN**

# The Year 1928 In Retrospect

The year 1928 has been fertile with fine performances and pictures as compared with 1927. It seems ironic that at a time the film companies were hitting on sixes the talkies arrived and upset the fine work being accomplished. 1927 was almost barren of anything worthwhile. Executives no doubt recognized this deficiency and were spurred on to make progress. While there were only a few pictures that merited the position of being almost great, there have been many that were darn good photoplays. Classed in this list are "The Singing Fool," "Alias Jimmy Valentine," "Forgotten Faces," "Four Sons," "Dancing Daughters," "Waterfront," "Three Sinners," "The Crowd," "Show People," "Four Walls."

The sound films then became the vogue with directors, players and writers in the groping stage. The result of this fad is problematical. That the talkies will be a medium for first-rate dialogue does not seem probable. They are a perfect expression for Al Jolson talents; personalities like George Bernard Shaw, Mussolini and Robert Benchly skits, but particularly singing like Jolson's.

1929 will be the most interesting, dangerous and experimental period in existence of motion pictures. It is difficult to foretell what will happen, for if the celluloid organizations show a little understanding of the sound innovation as they have of the silent drama (despite its 25 years) heaven knows what calamities will confront the canned industry.

It is surprising how many splendid performances were given this year. Clara Bow has probably become the biggest feminine draw on the screen. Betty Compson seems to have come forward in leaps and bounds—until she is in much demand. Baclanova is one of the most talked about film actresses, although there are many who do not feel she is star material. Joan Crawford has shown that she can act. Although he may not have gained a big fan following Earle Foxe has contrib-

uted some excellent work. Anita Page and Josephine Dunn are about the most popular of the younger, newer group. Due to the few productions in which she appears it is difficult for Janet Gaynor to retain the affections of a fickle public as strong as those of players who are seen often—but not too often, Charles Rogers, Gary Cooper, Nils Asther and Richard Arlen are "the thing" at the moment. Charles Farrell is not quite so much in the multitude's eye at present. How these actors and actresses will stand with the talkies prevailing remains to be seen.

Joseph von Sternberg seems to have come forward more than any other megaphone wielder. A von Sternberg picture is almost an event. One goes to his productions feeling sure not to be bored, and the result is never disapproving. Seastrom is a remarkable director. He has imagination and feeling, but it is doubtful if most of his films will make money. Harry d'Arrast turns out such entertaining material the film colony was surprised that he has not been placed under contract. Lubitsch's masterly direction of "The Patriot" needs no comment. George Fitzmaurice and Lewis Milestone are on the blue ribbon list. William Nigh always has touches that take his films out of the mere classification of "good money makers." William Seiter has done excellent work at First National.

These players and directors would be among the most promising if the movie was kept silent. Time will be the judge as long as the shadows talk, although most of the persons named should still head the list of 1929.

—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

## Czechoslovak to

### Support Films

Washington. — The Czechoslovakian government, in its budget, has set aside considerable sums for production, according to advices to the M. P. Section of the Dept. of Commerce.

## An Exhibitor Writes On The Talkie Situation

THE LUDCKE THEATRE

St. Peter, Minn.

Dec. 19, 1928.

Editor, Film Mercury:

Just a line to express my sentiments in regard to Mr. Martin S. Stanchfield's letter published in your November 30th issue.

This gentleman has certainly expressed my views on the sound picture proposition 100 percent, and I sincerely hope his prediction will come true. I have personally heard several of the talkies but cannot warm up to them, productions are "Flat" when one cannot catch all of the dialogue, like in many of the so-called talkies, consequently making the entertainment uninteresting. We so far have held off in installing the sound paraphernalia, as the situation and cost seems to be very unsettled for the small town theatre to consider at present.

Unless something is done to bring down the cost for the small town, say from \$2000 up—I cannot see a very long life for them. The film "Hounds" all say the talkies make 300 to 400 percent more business. Will grant this for thirty days, then—what's going to happen—with a 50% overhead in operating expenses. If anybody can show me where I can break even with the installation of a talkie, I am willing any minute to install one. I have yet to hear of a town our size, 3500, to install a talkie and to learn how it is paying out, hence I am waiting patiently for someone to enlighten me on this point. Having been showing pictures since 1907, and running the amusement end in our town for the past forty years, I feel I ought to know *just how much* money our community has to spend for amusements, but it seems I lack this knowledge when talking to many of the film salesmen and a few of the "Talkie machine" sellers.

This epistle of mine just expresses a small town exhibitor on this subject. May your Film Mercury live long and prosper.

H. J. LUDCKE.

## To Build Russia

### Raw Film Plant

Washington. — A German company is to be granted concession for the erection of a raw film factory in Russia, according to advices to the M. P. Section of the Dept. of Commerce. The proposed agreement calls for the factory to be built near Moscow, with 50 per cent of the capital and managing personnel to be German. Many offers have been received from German companies willing to conclude an agreement on above basis. Raw film requirements of Russia amount to approximately 81,250,000 feet of stock a year.

## Hungary to Make

### National Film

Washington. — A national Hungarian film will be produced in the near future in compliance with the Hungarian government's instructions, the M. P. Section of the Dept. of Commerce is advised. This title is "The Legend of the Hungarian Crown," directed by Joseph Letzter.

\* \* \*

## Berlin Plans

### Casting Bureau

Berlin.—Berlin plans to start a municipal casting bureau for extras. Directors have been compelled to seek extras from local coffee houses. The bureau is scheduled to open Jan. 2.



# Best Pictures and Performances of '28

## Best Pictures of the Year

AS SELECTED BY TAMAR LANE

"The Patriot."  
 "The Racket."  
 "The Barker."  
 "Sadie Thompson."  
 "The Wind."  
 "Dressed to Kill."  
 "Craig's Wife."  
 "Docks of New York."  
 "Outcast."  
 "The Spieler."

### TALKING PICTURES

"In Old Arizona."  
 "The Terror."  
 "The Singing Fool."  
 "On Trial."

## Best Performances of the Year

AS SELECTED BY TAMAR LANE

Emil Jannings in "The Patriot."  
 Louis Wolheim in "The Racket."  
 Betty Compson in "The Barker."  
 Louise Dresser in "Mother Knows Best."  
 Marion Davies in "The Patsy."  
 Joe E. Brown in "Hit of the Show."  
 Jack Mulhall in "Waterfront."  
 Earle Foxe in "Four Sons."  
 Irene Rich in "Craig's Wife."  
 Colleen Moore in "Synthetic Sin."  
 William Powell in "Interference."  
 Warner Baxter in "In Old Arizona."

## Best Pictures of the Year

AS SELECTED BY ANABEL LANE

"The Patriot."  
 "Docks of New York."  
 "The Last Command."  
 "The Racket."  
 "Sadie Thompson."  
 "Dry Martini."  
 "The Barker" (Silent Version).  
 "White Shadows in the South Seas."

## Best Performances of the Year

AS SELECTED BY ANABEL LANE

George Bancroft in "Docks of New York."  
 Emil Jannings in "The Patriot."  
 Albert Gran in "We Americans."  
 Betty Compson in "Docks of New York."  
 Baclanova in "Street of Sin."  
 Lewis Stone in "The Patriot."  
 Louise Dresser in "Mother Knows Best."  
 Gloria Swanson in "Sadie Thompson."  
 Raoul Walsh in "Sadie Thompson."  
 Marion Davies in "Show People."  
 Earle Foxe in "Four Sons."  
 Janet Gaynor in "The Street Angel."  
 Laura LaPlante in "Finders Keepers."  
 Skeets Gallagher in "Alex the Great."  
 John Gilbert in "Masks of the Devil."  
 Lars Hansen in "The Wind."  
 Margaret Mann in "Four Sons."

## Best Pictures of the Year

AS SELECTED BY RICHARD WATTS JR.

"The End of St. Petersburg."  
 "The Patriot."  
 "The Last Command."  
 "Ten Days That Shook The World."  
 "The Man Who Laughs."  
 "White Shadows in the South Seas."  
 "The Wind."  
 "The Big Noise."  
 "The Crowd."  
 "The Docks of New York."

## Best Performances of the Year

AS SELECTED BY RICHARD WATTS JR.

Alexis Danor in "The End of St. Petersburg."  
 Emil Jannings in "The Patriot."  
 Chester Conklin in "The Big Noise."  
 James Murray in "The Crowd."  
 Janet Gaynor in "Street Angel."  
 Charles Farrell in "The River."  
 Anita Page in "Dancing Daughters."  
 L. M. Leonidoff in "Czar Ivan the Terrible."  
 Olga Baclanova in "Streets of Sin."  
 Richard Tucker in "On Trial."  
 Davy Lee in "The Singing Fool."

# Announcing Winners of Awards of Merit for 1928

## IMPORTANT EDITORIAL NOTE

These Awards are being made in order that various individuals may be commended and rewarded for excellent individual work, even though the production upon which they worked may not have been outstanding in other particulars.

Attention is therefore called to the fact that in nominating candidates, The Film Mercury takes into consideration only the individual work of the player, writer or director as the case may be, and not the picture as a whole. If the picture as a whole is deemed excellent it will be listed under "Outstanding Pictures." If the picture as a whole is not deemed outstanding, The Film Mercury may, nevertheless, select one of the players, the director or the writer as having done outstanding work and nominate them for individual honors. In the past many studio workers have done fine work which has passed unheralded, due to the fact that the picture as a whole was not up to standard. The Film Mercury seeks to eliminate this condition and aid talented workers in gaining recognition.

## FINAL SELECTIONS

BEST PICTURE	- - - - -	<i>"The Patriot"</i>
BEST PERFORMANCE	- - - - -	<i>Emil Jannings</i>
BEST DIRECTION	- - - - -	<i>Ernst Lubitsch</i>
BEST ORIGINAL STORY	- - - - -	<i>"Office Scandal," Paul Gangelin and Jack Jungmeyer</i>
BEST SCENARIO	- - - - -	<i>"The Racket," by Del Andrews</i>

## Winners of Honorable Mention

### DIRECTORS

JOSEPH VON STERNBERG	- - - - -	<i>Docks of New York</i>
LEWIS MILESTONE	- - - - -	<i>The Rackett</i>
WILLIAM SEITER	- - - - -	<i>Waterfront</i>
RAOUL WALSH	- - - - -	<i>Sadie Thompson</i>
ROY DEL RUTH	- - - - -	<i>If I Were Single</i>
GEORGE FITZMAURICE	- - - - -	<i>The Barker</i>
IRVING CUMMINGS	- - - - -	<i>Dressed to Kill</i>
WILLIAM VAN DYKE	- - - - -	<i>White Shadows in the South Seas</i>
VICTOR SEASTROM	- - - - -	<i>The Wind</i>
FRED NEWMAYER	- - - - -	<i>Warming Up</i>
TAY GARNETT	- - - - -	<i>The Spieler</i>
HOWARD BRETHERTON	- - - - -	<i>Caught in the Fog</i>
WILLIAM COWEN	- - - - -	<i>Ned McCobb's Daughter</i>
KING VIDOR	- - - - -	<i>The Patsy</i>
WILLIAM K. HOWARD	- - - - -	<i>His Country</i>
LUDWIG BERGER	- - - - -	<i>Sins of the Fathers</i>
RALPH INCE	- - - - -	<i>Hit of the Show</i>
PAUL SLOANE	- - - - -	<i>The Blue Danube</i>
WILLIAM DE MILLE	- - - - -	<i>Craig's Wife</i>
WILLIAM BEAUDINE	- - - - -	<i>Heart to Heart</i>
HARRY BEAUMONT	- - - - -	<i>Dancing Daughters</i>



# The Film Mercury's Awards of Merit

## Winners of Honorable Mention

### Players

Marion Davies in "The Patsy"  
Gloria Swanson in "Sadie Thompson"  
Earle Foxe in "Four Sons"  
Joe E. Brown in "Hit of the Show"  
William Powell in "Interference"  
Louis Wolheim in "The Rackett"  
Betty Compson in "The Barker"

Irene Rich in "Craig's Wife"  
Milton Sills in "The Barker"  
George Bancroft in "The Drag Net"  
Dorothy Mackaill in "The Barker"  
Louise Dresser in "Mother Knows Best"  
Colleen Moore in "Synthetic Sin"  
Ruth Chatterton in "Sins of the Fathers"

### Scenarists

Benjamin Glazer—"The Barker"  
Waldemar Young—"London After Midnight"  
Hans Kraly—"The Patriot"  
Howard Estabrook—"Forgotten Faces"  
Clara Beranger—"Craig's Wife"  
Finis Fox—"Ramona"  
Del Andrews—"The Rackett"  
Harvey Gates—"The Terror"  
Tom Geraghty—"Waterfront"  
Adelaide Heilbron—"Heart to Heart"  
Charles Kenyon—"The Foreign Legion"  
Ethel Dougherty—"The Showdown"

Graham Baker—"The Singing Fool"  
Agnes Christine Johnson—"The Patsy"  
Earle Snell—"That's My Daddy"  
Charles Condon—"Caught in the Fog"  
Jules Furthman—"Docks of New York"

### ORIGINAL STORIES

Robert Lord—"If I Were Single"  
Jack Jungmeyer—"The Shady Lady"  
Hal Conklin—"The Spieler"  
Will Chappel and Gertrude Orr—"Waterfront"  
Houston Branch—"The Showdown"  
Jack Townley—"The Wright Idea"  
Leigh Jason—"Anybody Here Seen Kelly?"

# Best Pictures and Performances of '28

as selected by Richard Watts Jr.

Well, here it is again, the end of the cinema's fiscal year, and it is up to all of us professional screen observers to set down our favorite pictures and performances of the season, our verdicts on the current trend of the films and our judgments on the other requirements a reviewer must meet to retain his standing as a regular member of the Screen Critics Union. The first demand is the publishing of the ten best pictures of 1928 but I will presume on the mercy of the house committee and provide at the outset a list of all the pictures that seemed to me worthy of consideration for place in the privileged group.

Before making any of my lists I would beg leave to state parenthetically that such selections are bound to be highly tentative. No matter how carefully you may go over all of the pictures you have seen during 1928, you are bound to forget some of them while making your choices. Furthermore the list made today is bound to differ, if only just a trifle, from the list made tomorrow. I defy you to make a selection of the ten best of anything right now and then, after making another list in twenty-four hours, discover that the two coincide.

All of these apologies and explanations having been made, it may be time to get down to the business of the lists. First, I shall try to present, as alphabetically as possible, the photoplays I saw during 1928 that seemed to me worthy of consideration for membership among the ten best of the period. Thanks to "The Film Daily," which has published the names of all the pictures released during the season, it is possible to check off the following films: "Beggars of Life," "The Big Noise," "The Circus," "The Crowd," "Docks of New York," "Dressed to Kill," "Dr. Martini," "Forgotten Faces," "Ivan the Terrible," "The Last Command," "The End of St. Petersburg," "The

Magnificent Flirt," "The Man Who Laughs," "Mother Knows Best," "The Patriot," "The Racket," "Sadie Thompson," "Show People," "Street Angel," "The Student Prince," "Submarine," "Ten Days That Shook the World," "Homecoming," "Shadows of Fear," "White Shadows in the South Seas," and "The Wind." Unless I miss my count grievously the number is twenty-four.

Having fought off the inevitable as long as possible, the only thing left to do is toss aside cowardice and bravely name the following as the ten best photoplays of 1928:

"The End of St. Petersburg."  
"The Patriot."  
"The Last Command."  
"Ten Days That Shook the World."  
"The Man Who Laughs."  
"White Shadows in the South Seas."  
"The Wind."  
"The Big Noise."  
"The Crowd."  
"The Docks of New York."

On going back over my list I am struck at the outset by two considerations. The first is that the first four of my ten were either made in Russia or are based on Russian themes. The second is the unfairness of deciding arbitrarily on ten pictures as my quota, and thus omitting "Ivan the Terrible" (another Muscovite work), "The Racket," "Homecoming" and "Street Angel" from a group they most completely belong to.

It might be well to add in an explanatory note that "Ten Days" is included because of the tremendous power of many of its individual scenes, rather than through its merit as an artistic entirety; that "The Big Noise" is named because it contains a quality of distinctively local political satire that, in its implications, is both unique and devastating; that "The Crowd" finds a place for the fine honesty of its effort, rather than for any complete fulfillment, and that

"The Docks of New York" is selected for its distinct and impressive directorial and pictorial style, rather than for any merit of story or dramatic movement . . . . That may suffice for apologies at the moment.

The matter of the ten best performances is even more difficult, because the tendency is to list players who have appeared in the ten best picture group and forget the competent portrayals in lesser films. It is surprising how inevitably first-rate photoplays find first rate performers to act in them.

Nevertheless there may be a certain value in the naming of the ten performances that first spring to mind when trying to pick out such a group, and so, without any more apologies, I beg to offer the ten characterizations which I remember most vividly from my 1928 picture-going. They are:

Alexis Danor, the boy in "The End of St. Petersburg."  
Emil Jannings in "The Patriot."

Chester Conklin in "The Big Noise."

James Murray in "The Crowd."

Janet Gaynor in "Street Angel."

Charles Farrell in "The River."

Anita Page in "Dancing Daughters."

L. M. Leonidoff in "Czar Ivan the Terrible."

Olga Baclanova in "Streets of Sin."

Richard Tucker in "On Trial."

Davy Lee in "The Singing Fool."

Somehow or other it seems absurd that there isn't room in such a company for the portrayals of John Gilbert in "Masks of the Devil," Raquel Torres in "White Shadows in the South Seas," Lillian Gish in "The Wind," Clive Brook in "Interference," Lewis Stone in "The Patriot" and Clara Bow in "Ladies of the Mob."

As nearly as I can recall, it

is the duty of such a survey to suggest something about the apparent tendencies of the films. Of course, it seems the logical thing to say a word about the inevitability of the talking cinema and I would do so were it not for the fact that I have yet to meet a layman who doesn't despise the new medium. I wonder if this doesn't indicate that screen speech is in for a more difficult time than it suspects and that there is a distinct possibility of the silent photoplay staging an effective comeback during 1929. I hope I am not too optimistic.

\* \* \*

## Alexander On Warner Script

J. Grubb Alexander, who recently completed his contract with Universal and immediately signed with Warner Bros. has received his first assignment from the latter organization. Alexander is writing the screen version and dialogue on "The Gamblers," a stage play by Charles Klein which scored successfully several years ago throughout the East. Alexander's most recent effort was the screen version and dialogue on "The Bargain in the Kremlin" for Universal.

\* \* \*

## Littlefield Signs

Lucien Littlefield has been signed by Wid Gunning to essay the featured character role in "The Haunted House," which is to go into production immediately.

\* \* \*

## Snell Original for "U"

Earle Snell's latest original story for Universal, "Companionate Troubles," will go into production early next month.

\* \* \*

## Denny Talkers

Reginald Denny's three latest pictures, "Red Hot Speed," "Clear the Deck" and "His Lucky Day" are being transposed into talking productions under the direction of Edward Cline, for Universal.



## Gibson Troop On Location Trip

Having been delayed by an injury, Hoot Gibson with Ruth Elder, his leading lady, and a company of fifty left this week for King City where work will begin immediately on Gibson's independent starring production for Universal, temporarily titled, "Birds of a Feather."

Cast includes Allan Forrest, Charles N. Shaeffer, Herbert Prior, Jack Knapp, Bill Gillis and Jack Herrick. Arthur Rosson is directing. Three air ships are being taken to King City as part of the equipment.

\* \* \*

## Jack Jungmeyer to Write Original

Pathe has assigned Jack Jungmeyer to write an original story for their 1929 product.

## Chappel Finishes at "U"

Will Chappel, contract writer at Universal, is now completing the adaptation on "The Luxury Husband" before terminating his contract with that company. In four and a half months Chappel completed four assignments for originals and adaptations which have been accepted for Universal's 1929 program. The fourth of these is "The Great Cinema Murder," an all talkie. Chappel will transfer his affiliations to another company early in January.

\* \* \*

## Gangelin Original

Paul Gangelin will write another original story for Pathe. Gangelin with Jack Jungmeyer wrote "The Office Scandal," Pathe's successful newspaper story.

# A Letter to the Editor

FALCON PRODUCTIONS  
6363 Santa Monica Blvd.  
Hollywood, California

December 24, 1928

Mr. Tamar Lane,  
Film Mercury,  
Hollywood, Calif.

My Dear Mr. Lane:

So agreeably surprised was I when, in reading the Anniversary Number of the Film Mercury, I noticed your editorial comment regarding my production of short-subjects in connection with the Boy Scouts of America, that I hasten to express my appreciation.

Many months of preliminary work were required before entire arrangements were completed and it is a great pleasure to me to know that your sympathy is with the idea and that you feel that my efforts have not been in vain. It was thru the splendid co-operation of E. B. DeGroot, L. A. District, B.S.A. that the National publicity tie-ups were effected.

It may interest you to know that the first picture of the series, The Tenderfoot, as well as the idea of the series, has already received the endorsement of many influential organizations, magazines and laymen, including The Camp Fire Girls; Girl Scouts; Hollywood Post 43, American Legion; Tenth District Congress of Parents and Teachers; Child Welfare, P.T.A.; Federated Womens Clubs; National Publishers and others.

Because of the extended Exhibitor circulation of your paper I have instructed our publicity department to prepare and forward advertising copy for insertion in the Mercury and I trust it will be acceptable to you and find available space in your next issue.

With very best wishes to you for the New Year, I am,  
Very truly yours,

DONAVIN MILLER.

## LESLIE FENTON GOES TO FOX

Leslie Fenton, spirited young character actor, is another actor who is starting the new year as he had hoped.

Fox presented him this week with a featured role in Lew Seiler's next picture "The Girl Who Couldn't Stop," with Sue Carol and Nick Stuart.

Bertram Milhauser, who wrote the story in collaboration with Beulah Marie Dix, is supervising the production. It is rumored that Fenton may be given a contract with this company at the completion of this picture.

Fenton is now completing the French and German Talking sequences for Universal's "Erik the Great."

\* \* \*

## BODIL ROSING HAS RECORD

Bodil Rosing, Danish character actress, has established what seems to be a record for successive assignments of mother roles, has portrayed every nationality except her own. Of her recent pictures she was a Russian-Jewish mother to Dick Barthelmess in "Wheel of Chance;" French mother to Marian Nixon in "Out of the Ruins;" American-Irish mother to Clara Bow in "The Fleet's In!" Swedish mother to Alice White in "The Big Noise;" Swiss to Camilla Horn in "King of the Mountains;" German to Janet Gaynor in "Sunrise" and American mother to Colleen Moore in her latest picture "That's A Bad Girl" for First National.

\* \* \*

## AFTER VIOLA DANA

With two studios bidding for her services, we wonder which will sign Viola Dana. With her motion picture experience coupled with that of the stage Miss Dana should be an asset to any company.

## H. B. WARNER SIGNED

H. B. Warner was signed yesterday by Warner Bros. for the role of Jim Darwin, an important character in the old-time stage play "The Gamblers" which Michael Curtiz is next to direct. It is a powerful drama of New York society life, and a type of role that this finished actor does so well.

Vitagraph made this picture years ago as a "noiseless" and Warner Brothers are to make it a 100% Vitaphone production. Lois Wilson and John Bowers have already been signed.

Warner expects to complete his role of district attorney in "The Trial of Mary Dugan" for M-G-M just in time to start this new picture.

\* \* \*

## MARY NOLAN BUSY

Mary Nolan, who has given splendid performances in her latest two pictures for M-G-M, is having her first billboard stands made with John Gilbert this week. The picture is "Thirst" with Miss Nolan supporting the star.

\* \* \*

## EDNA MURPHY WITH WARNERS

Edna Murphy has been signed on a long term contract by Warner Bros., according to Darryl Zanuck, associate executive. While Zanuck stated that Miss Murphy has not been assigned to her initial role under the contract, such an announcement will be forthcoming shortly it is believed, in view of the number of productions Warners are launching in January.

Miss Murphy is a distinct blonde type with a dual ability of playing both heroine or "vamp" roles.

\* \* \*

Watch for Oscar Balzer's after Xmas Sale. Mr. Balzer's Gift Shop at 6326 Hollywood Blvd., specializes in only the latest. —Adv.



# FILM MERCURY WINS TALKIE VICTORY

Latest developments in the motion picture industry have proven that the Film Mercury has won a notable and remarkable victory in regard to its predictions and analysis on the eventual effect and outcome of the talking picture situation.

The successful manner in which the Film Mercury has foretold the developments and limitations of the talking film is a noteworthy example of accurate, fearless and enterprising journalism.

After weighing and appraising both the possibilities and the shortcomings of the sound film several months ago, the Film Mercury has steadfastly maintained that any idea that the talkie would be a panacea and a financial bonanza for the film magnates is a delusion. While other publications, and the film industry in general, were being misled because of the success of one or two talking pictures, the Film Mercury claimed that these were merely isolated cases and that in the long run sound films would be no better box office attractions than silent productions. It was also asserted that when the books were finally balanced the magnates would discover that their profits were no bigger than before but that they had needlessly sunk millions of dollars into sound stages and equipment that might have been utilized for dividends or other purposes.

Box office reports collected throughout the country by the Film Mercury, Variety and other trade journals testify that the power of the talking film as a box office magnet is already rapidly on the wane and that good silent films are drawing just as much money as sound pictures—and in many cases more.

The Film Mercury did not, nor does it now, assert that the talkie will completely die out, but this publication contends that the introduction of sound into films has brought little, if any, benefit of a lasting nature

to the motion picture industry. On the other hand, the talkie has turned the film industry upside down and brought about a chaos that will last for a considerable length of time and will eliminate from the industry many of the men who have encouraged the sound craze.

The Film Mercury believes that the Warner Bros. had a logical reason for introducing Vitaphone. It was a good piece of showmanship at a time when the Warner Company was in rather sore straits. As a novelty Vitaphone features were bound to clean up, and the Warner Bros. are now reaping the harvest as a result of having been first in the field with a new form of entertainment that was bound to draw the public for a limited time. Other film concerns, however, are getting into the field too late for big profits and should have made a more gradual shift from silence to sound.

Talking pictures may continue to be the vogue with studios, not only this year but for an indefinite period. This, however, does not mean that the talking film is a success nor that the public prefers sound pictures. The public does not always get what it prefers unless that preference develops to such a marked extent that the public will accept no substitute. Talking pictures, as far as the public is concerned, might be likened to four-wheel auto brakes. Some autoists like four-wheel brakes—others do not. Autoists, however, are not responsible for four-wheel brakes being placed upon cars. The decision rests with the auto concerns. If they decide to equip all autos with four-wheel brakes, the public of necessity will accept them, temporarily at least, whether they prefer them or not. If the four-wheel brakes behave satisfactorily the public may accept them indefinitely, although neither the autoist nor the auto manufacturers may be the better off because of it.

If, however, after a fair trial autoists come to the conclusion that four-wheel brakes

are a nuisance and decidedly inferior to the old fashioned brakes, and make a strenuous kick to the auto dealers, manufacturers will be forced to discontinue the four-wheel brakes.

The same condition applies to talking pictures. If the film producers turn out moderately entertaining sound films the public may continue to patronize the cinema without strenuous complaint. If the talkies do not show a decided improvement within the next few months, however, the public is almost certain to register disapproval by remaining away from the theatres. The main point to be stressed is: No matter which way the pendulum swings, the film industry is no better off than it was before and in all likelihood the film magnates have achieved nothing but the bringing down of a load of troubles on their own heads.

These facts were all forecast and commented upon by the Film Mercury many months ago, and film producers could have profited by them if they were not so quick to label every constructive thought of importance as "destructive criticism."

As far back as the May 4, 1928, issue of the Film Mercury (eight months ago) the writer made the following prediction:

"There are few Al Jolson in theatricals, but from the way the film moguls are grasping and scrambling for talking picture rights one would imagine that the world is down on its knees begging the celluloid monarchs for talkies. As the sheep must have a leader, so must the average film company."

In the same issue of the Film Mercury appeared an article by Anabel Lane containing the following prognostication:

"Most of these simple folk think all that is necessary, is to have some dialogue and a song and the poorest production will be saved. After a number of talking pictures have been produced and the novelty has worn off with the public, the executives will find themselves in a greater quandary than before. For the fundamental requirements of a silent movie and a talking movie are the same. The dialogue, however, will be even more important than subtitles. In fact, stupid dialogue will be even worse than wisecracking titles.

"The talking device will only help the producers for a little while. For in the long run, a talking picture will have to stand on its merits, not on its novelty."

In the Sound Film Number of the Film Mercury (the first issue of any film publication devoted to the sound era) published July 6, 1928, the writer commented as follows:

"Because of their novelty, sound films should bring about a marked increase in theatre attendance for a certain length of time. After that, the film magnates will be pretty much back where they started from."

In the same issue, Anabel Lane offered the following comment:

"The producers do not seem to realize that at present it is the Vitaphone versus the silent drama. Up to the present, the public has had no choice—if they wished to see a sound production, they have to go to the Vitaphone. Will the sound picture be so lucrative when almost every motion picture produced has sound and talking?"

"When all of the releases are sound movies, the multitudes will not run helter skelter to the theatre. The m. p. industry will then reach the situation it has always been in. The fans will choose the pictures they wish to see. Where now they have to go to the Vitaphone in the future there will be so many cinemas to see and hear, the novelty will have worn off and the selection of favorites will again be the barometer."

The Film Mercury was also the first publication to herald the fact that the box office power of the sound film is on the decline, as attested by theatre reports. Accordingly Anabel Lane in the November 16, 1928 issue commented as follows:

"With most of the film companies producing talking photoplays the public has already issued its verdict by attending those which it liked and stayed away from others which did not appear pleasing. The stage where the multitudes flocked to the theatre merely because the talking film was a novelty has passed. The producers watched the Warner Theatre in Hollywood with crowds waiting to get in and believed they had found the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. What really has happened is, that the film cost has been increased (when one considers the cost of sound studios and equipment), and the making of a picture more difficult. Yet the result will be the same as it was with silent production—some sound pictures will be successful, others will not.

—Tamar Lane.





## **CHARLES R. CONDON**

Now Working On

*Adaptation and Scenario*

for

RAYMOND CANNON'S PRODUCTION

**"FOLLOW MY LEADER"**

*A William Fox Special*

## Movie Triangle Now Out of Date

Boston.—The "eternal triangle" is not so popular a theme for moving pictures as it has been, in the opinion of Sydney H. Cliffe. Mr. Cliffe, Wallace C. Day and James H. Sheeran are the men who give their approval of all pictures shown on Sunday in this State.

All day, every day in the week, these three sit in an office of the Massachusetts Public Safety Department and decide what movies the public may attend and what they may not. They pass on 50 reels a day and out of that 50 they make eliminations in at least 30. They completely disapprove two or three.

"There is no such thing as State censorship in this State," related Mr. Cliffe. "There is a law, however, regarding Sunday entertainments and although the movie agents are not obliged to send their movies to us for approval they find it is wiser to get them approved than to have the investigators report on them and have them banned."

"Years ago the theatres showed a separate picture on Sunday from the picture shown on weekdays, but now many of the big pictures open on Sundays. More than half the pictures we see need eliminations that extend from 10 feet to 50 or 60 feet. There was a time when this office made these eliminations with no regard for the continuity of the picture, but nowadays we try to disturb the theme as little as possible. We do this in various ways either showing the disapproved part in a flash or making cuts as artistically as possible."

"While complicated love problem pictures are having a temporary rest we are getting

an increased number of under-world shows. They are drawn from Chicago for the most part and all sorts of banditry, gun warfare, holdups, bootlegging, etc., are strung into a picture, the only excuse for which is the moral at the end. We find more and more of these pictures that contain the worst kind of scenes and think the moral will carry them, but we are pretty strict and the moral must really be a part of the picture if they want our approval.

"Slapstick comedy has gone by the board and we see a great improvement over the vulgarity of other days. The movies are certainly improving both in artistry and in subject. The latest innovation of talkies may come to stay, but we look on it more as a fad. If it does take hold we will install a machine so that we can approve the talkies, too. There are some movies that are so good I plan to see them again after I have seen them here. But for the most part even the most enthusiastic movie fan would be completely satisfied if they found themselves in our place day in and day out."

\* \* \*

### To Start On

#### Schildkraut Film

In compliance with telegraphic instructions received from Carl Laemmle, now in New York, Universal executives requested the Fox organization to abrogate the contract binding Joseph Schildkraut to appear as the male lead in "Through Different Eyes." Laemmle, it was learned, ordered that Schildkraut's first starring vehicle, "The Bargain in the Kremlin" go into production immediately as a talking picture.

\* \* \*

### 233 Club Meeting

Having purchased and remodeled the former Masquers Club home at McCadden and Yucca, the 233 Club of Hollywood will hold its first meeting in its own home the second week of January, President Rex B. Goodcell has announced. An auditorium to accommodate 1000 will be built onto the new 233 Clubhouse shortly after January 1 it is stated.

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# THE FILM PARADE

*As seen by* RICHARD WATTS JR.

Photoplay Editor, *New York Herald-Tribune*

Despite all my enmity to the idea of the talking motion picture, there is one defense of the silent screen that I cannot enthuse over. Almost every friend of the quiet cinema I have encountered—and, somehow or other, they are far more numerous than you might suspect—has expressed his preference in parctically the same words. "The chief virtue of the old-time films," they all try to tell me, "was their restfulness."

Now, certainly I have no intention of disputing the value of peace and quiet, but if the screen were only important as a cure for insomnia I'm afraid I wouldn't devote so much time to being a crusader for it. For it is difficult to escape the suspicion that this particular defense is merely part of that ancient American feeling of contempt for the cinema that has played such an important part in the current debacle of the films. This feeling has always expressed itself in two ways. The first and most bitter was to be encountered in the so-called "high-brow" attitude towards pictures, which revealed itself in the profound scorn and absurd superiority that class usually referred to as the intelligentsia has shown towards every manifestation of this struggling new art form. The second, and equally dangerous, was a more unconscious attitude.

This subconscious point of view was, if I may subdivide my points once again, expressed in two ways. There was the group that proclaimed, probably in all sincerity, that the only important photoplays were cheap melodramas, chiefly of the Western variety, and the crudest of slapstick. Such people, perforce, declined to be advocates and defenders of the really important strivings towards first-rate efforts, though they belonged to the class from which such a defense should

have sprung. The other band is the one I mentioned first; the group that prizes picture houses merely as resting places.

It is impossible to deny that in the midst of the raucous, strident civilization our machine age has built up there is something to be said for any agency that supplies rest and contemplation. Parenthetically it might be noted that this cry for a sanctuary usually arises from the class that needs rest the least of all our people; the so-called "tired business man" who already has so many methods, from the Rotary Club to the cheap fiction magazines, to keep him from his overestimated fatigue, that he really doesn't need another for the same purpose.

Even, though, if the screen did possess a certain value as a rest cure for this previously mentioned and thoroughly overrated gentleman, any dependence on this quality would be fatal to the motion picture. It would mean the employment of safe-and-sane themes, of inevitably happy endings, of an exclusive preoccupation with rose-colored romances and inoffensive ideas. It would mean the doom of any attempt to present anything frank or striking or vigorous or original or contrary to the accepted tenets of what used to be called one hundred percent. America. In short, it would mean the destruction of the screen as a medium for a really creative and distinctive art form as completely as the talking film seems likely to mean the same ruin.

Just as a similar feeling in the theatre has tended to bring success more and more exclusively to childish musical comedies and inane romances and to make life continuously more difficult for provocative and disturbing plays of some aesthetic importance, this attitude in the cinema means, in the end, death to the Von Stroheims, the

Lubitschs, the Jannings and all the other honest artists of the screen. For where such a movement is felt with comparative moderateness on the stage, it falls heavily on the cinema, where there is not to be found the large group of enthusiasts for things of merit that has made the success of such eminent groups as the Theatre Guild and Miss Eva Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory Theatre in New York.

As a matter of fact, I think that New York goes quite nobly to the defense of the better things of the screen. The Jannings films may flop miserably in the other sections of the United States, but in Manhattan they are invariably huge successes. Von Stroheim and Lubitsch are loyally supported, and the great Britain masterpieces are ardently cheered. If, however, even in this Metropolitan citadel of civilization and the arts, the Better Things have something of a struggle against the cheaper efforts, it is hardly being extreme to say that the battle is considerably more difficult in the outlying districts. Even in advanced Manhattan the cult of the Cinema Sleepers is not without its followers and out of the city the number of devotees is most impressive. The result is that a class of people, whose words indicate a tremendous friendship for the silent screen, are really hostile to its best manifestations, and thus, for all their good wishes, are essentially foes, rather than loyal friends.

If these unintentional enemies are of little help to the silent medium they think they are advocating, so, it is only fair to add, are certain advocates of the talking pictures of scant help to the dramatic form they are endeavoring to cheer on to victory. I have in mind the group which proclaims that the new device will present an advance because it will substitute, for the stupid-

ness of the silent screen players, the brilliance of the mentally alert audible stage players. Such an argument is so absurd that I hesitate to pay it the compliment of combatting it.

In the first place, to repeat what I said last week, intelligence is by no means helpful to an actor, since on either stage or screen, it is emotional receptivity that really counts, and a particularly good mind is likely to be only a handicap to such a quality. Even, though, intelligence did happen to be vital to the success of an actor, there is no reason to believe that stage players would profit by the demand. I think I have seen enough thespians, of both mediums, to say pretty dogmatically, that the old idea about the superior mentality of the talking actors is entirely absurd. It is, in fact, as foolish as you would expect a belief based on the contention that there is some connection between mind and talk to be. When advocates of the speaking films advance such a reason for the superiority of the new manner they can hardly be set down as convincing debaters.

\* \* \*

## First Thunder Bay Film Is Completed

Filming of "The Devil Bear" has been completed. Director Louis W. Chaudet and producer Sargeson V. Halstead are cutting and titling this, the first of a series of features made by Thunder Bay Films, Ltd., of Fort Williams, Ontario. This Canadian company owned by citizens of the Thunder Bay district is specializing on films with exterior locations in Canada and unlike other independent companies is taking advantage of Hollywood's facilities to film interiors at local studios. Dorothy Dwan, Mitchell Lewis and Charles Crockett are among the fine cast Chaudet has employed in "The Devil Bear."



# The Salvation of the Cinema

By FRANK PEASE

(Frank Pease, author of this article, is a writer of international reputation. While the Film Mercury does not necessarily endorse or agree with the opinions herewith expressed, we are printing Mr. Pease's article in the interests of an open forum on the talkie situation.—Editor).

In all considerations looking to genuine dramatic efforts for the cinema we come today to the speaking cinema. Introduction of voices shifts, changes and transforms the entire emphasis as to what shall hereafter constitute practical cinema efforts guaranteeing box-office returns. In spite of much naive and perhaps even honest opinion to the opposite, there is nothing contradictory between art and profits, between genuine drama and the satisfying of an audience, between primary principles in aesthetics and popularity. It is all a question whether they are actually or only presumptively practiced. It is the question of art or hokum, of man or nature, of the finished actor or the unfinished "realist."

The point is that speaking picture audiences are not going to be satisfied with spoken dialogue that is only on a par artistically with what has hitherto served the cinema pictorially. That would be too much! The counterpart, phonetically, of vast footage pictorially, would mean voices that are "lurid," super-stentorian, hoarse beyond all hearing. It would mean a dialogue too Victorian, too saccharine, too "movie" to please even the ten-twenty tastes of the gallery gods. While it might be a fine dramatic punctuation to hear the forty thousand roaring their Roman salvos in Niblo's *Ben Hur*, it is extremely questionable whether movie audiences could stand the Great Wide West's he men hee-hawing, the she-vamp's sibilants and the flapper's titterings "about It and about." Our ears will put up with less nonsense or noisomeness than our eyes; we are made that way, thank goodness!

If no dramatic improvement were to take place through the speaking cinema—which is horrifying to contemplate—what sort of voices would correspond

with what has hitherto characterized so much cinema product: size, space, quantity, numbers, the stupendous, the overwhelming, the "knock 'em dead" extravagance in visual effects that of necessity dwarfed to relative insignificance whatever of real drama and real acting there may have happened to be? Even to raise the question is terrifying.

The point is that point which has so long been missed by the cinema, namely, that art, is not any "holding the mirror up to nature," but is far rather that throwing upon the mirror of the screen *man's interpretation of man and nature*. Art is a representation, not merely a presentation of nature. Art, again the drama, is a selecting, simplifying and restraining of the elements of man and nature, not merely a photographing of nature "as she is."

If this point has been missed by the cinema, the spoken dialogue is quickly bringing it to the front. In speaking pictures immediately the matter of selection comes in, even in a drama of the most realistic realism. For what things shall be spoken? How shall they be spoken? When spoken? Finally, by whom spoken? Obviously, all things shall not be spoken. Nor may they be spoken in any manner which the uninformed, the uncouth and the uncultured choose to speak them or direct that they be spoken. This is not a matter of official censorship merely; for if, as has been observed, it requires three hundred years of breeding to produce a cultured speaking voice, it has taken ages to produce that instinctive appreciation in audiences as to what is proper, fitting and permissible in all theatric formality. "Proper," "fitting" and "permissible" are, after all, only another way of recognising selection, simplicity and restraint in things theatric, because, just here the dra-

ma is more concerned with manner than with moral, holding that if the manners are genuine they will also be artistic, and if artistic they will also be moral. The censor of the future will be the audience, not the Censor.

The speaking cinema makes clear the fact that most direc-

tors have been mere prose writers rather than dramatists, and fairly excessive prose writers at that, a la Theodore Dreiser. But the day of mere prose just as the day of mere pose in the cinema is passing. The speaking cinema spills the beans; it *tells* whether He or She or only the camera has "It."

## F. N. Plans Big Film Drive

The 1929 schedule for First National Pictures will include thirty-five First National-Vitaphone features and several specials intended for road showing and long runs.

The cost of this program will be over \$18,000,000, all to be expended locally.

This announcement was made this week at First National Studios by Warner Brothers. The year's program will insure more activity at the big Burbank plant than in any time in the history of First National Productions here, it is claimed.

Stars who will appear in the 1929 program are Colleen Moore, Corinne Griffith, Richard Barthelmess, Milton Sills, Billie Dove, Alice White, Dorothy Mackaill and Jack Mulhall. Each will contribute from two to four productions during the year, all Vitaphoned throughout and many 100% dialogue pictures.

In addition to the star pictures, there will be a number of specials with all-star casts.

With the completion of the new sound stages at First National, and the remodeling of the silent stages for Vitaphone, the Burbank plant now has nine stages available for the filming

of talking pictures. This number will be increased to twelve.

Production activities will be increased at the studio immediately after the first of the year. Among the first pictures to go into production in 1929 are:

Colleen Moore in "Early to Bed," a college story by Lynn and Lois Seyster Montross.

Corinne Griffith in "Prisoners," the famous Ferne Molnar play.

Richard Barthelmess in an untitled play.

Billie Dove in "The Man and the Moment," by Elinor Alice White in "Hot Stuff,"

Glyn.

a gay college opus.

Jack Mulhall and Dorothy Mackaill in "Two Weeks Off," by Kenyon Nicholson.

"The Squall," the Vitaphone version of the successful Broadway play.

"The House of Horrors," a mystery story.

Production activities at the First National studios are now under the supervision of J. L. Warner, with Al Rockett as Associate Executive and Anthony Coldewey as his assistant. The latter has recently joined the staff there, and will be in charge of the story activities and the writers.

### HARRISON WILEY

ART DIRECTOR

Columbia Studios



# Photography of the Talkie

By GLEN GANO

From all indications, the advent of the talkie has caused "hands down" in regards to quality in photography — the general cry being "sound" first, then as an afterthought—photography. I am just as interested in the talkie as anyone, but I will go on record now as saying: No matter how many mechanical devices are invented to make sound effects, they will only act as individual supports for photography and both are indispensable to entertainment.

The novelty of the talkie is over and from now on the audience expects to see good pictures, which means photographically, talkitively and story. The technical departments in all branches of the business will not only have to get busy, but work together in harmony to produce results.

One of the worst faults at present, from the story entertainment angle is; the story is rehearsed all the way through, then without trying out the lines before an audience, it is photographed and recorded. My opinion is that if a prospective play is to be recorded for the screen it should first be rehearsed on a speaking stage to a real audience for timing and also find out the reactions when it is finally photographed it will be more like a real legitimate play that has run for a few weeks. Any actor, no matter how clever, cannot do his best work the first time he rehearses, he gets better with practice, but not from rehearsing without an audience.

Photographically, the right kind of research is not employed today, there are departments existing that spend considerable money, but without adequate results. The reason for this is, the proper men are not at the head of these departments and this discrepancy will not be righted until the management wakes up.

Just to single out one fault—the incandescent lamp—Fortunately, I began to use incandescents several years ago thru necessity—not only was I forced to use them in the house

(photographing the "Strongheart" pictures), but on the stage to get better results with animals. I did not realize at the time that they would be indispensable to the future talkie but I began extensive research at that time and have carried on experiments ever since.

The most important problem right now is "sound." As usual the studios have put the cart before the horse by building sound proof buildings — what could be more absurd? The other day an executive was walking across the lot with the general manager, when a siren blew, he asked what it was for and was told that it was to stop the noises such as hammering, etc. "What!" he said, "I thought we had sound proof stages."

I have been asked several times lately by the laymen why photography is so bad in the talkie. In the production of talking pictures it has heretofore been the practice to position a microphone within a few feet of the actor, or what ever sound is to be recorded. It has been found that if the pick-up device or microphone is moved too far from the actor, interference occurs to such an extent that the sound picked up in the microphone is unintelligible and is accompanied with half-tone sounds, which when reproduced, render the reproduction extremely hollow and disagreeable. It is obvious then that the microphone at present is taking up all the room on the set and every cameraman knows this is a detriment to proper lighting of the set. This default however, is eliminated by an invention owned by a company known as the "Allied Technicians," which company consists of men who have had considerable experience in the production of motion pictures and are able to get practical results. From the demonstrations I have witnessed recently of this new device, I am convinced that 75 percent of all interference can be eliminated and the director can talk to his actors while they are speaking their lines,

## Pathe to Make British Sound Films

London.—First National Pathe, Ltd., of which John Maxwell is chairman, has been licensed to produce sound pictures under patents of British Talking Pictures. Technicians are preparing sound-proofing of the First National Pathe London studio for production of talkers. British Sound Film Prod., recently licensed, is making about 3,000 feet of sound shorts weekly including a talking newsreel.

\* \* \*

## Theatre Operating In Spain

Washington.—There are approximately 2,062 theatres with a combined seating capacity of 1,468,750 operating in Spain, the M. P. Section of the Dept. of Commerce states. Of the total 327 theatres operate daily. The capacity range of theatres are between 750 and 2000 with only about 30 houses seating between 2,000 and 3,000 people.

which is impossible now. With this device, sound proof stages will be unnecessary.

(Continued Next Week)

## Skirboll Organizing World Sales Force

Atlanta. — Joseph Skirboll, general sales manager for World Wide Pictures, Inc., spent Monday in Atlanta on the second leg of a journey which will take him to the Pacific Coast and having for its purpose the organization of World Wide's field sales force. E. F. Dardine was chosen to head World Wide's sales efforts in the Carolinas, opening his office Jan. 14 in the Educational branch.

\* \* \*

## FBO Talker Title Changed

New York—"Syncopation" is new title chosen for FBO's first all-talker, which Robert Kane is producing at Sound Studios, New York. The picture formerly was known as "Stepping High."

\* \* \*

## Robert Edeson at M-G-M

Robert Edeson is playing in the M-G-M picture "The Man Higher Up." It was written and is being directed by William DeMille. The production will be a talking film.

# Paul Perez



# Richard Barthelmess

Exclusive  
Representative

Lichtig &  
Englander

... has completed the titles and dialogue for George Fitzmaurice's "His Captive Woman." He is now titling Frank Lloyd's "Weary River," starring.



# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

**"IN OLD ARIZONA,"** a William Fox Production.

Directed by R. A. Walsh and Irving Cummings.

Based on a story by O. Henry.

Dialogues by Tom Barry.

Cast: Warner Baxter, Edmund Lowe, Dorothy Burgess and J. Farrell McDonald.

## Critical Viewpoint:

This picture probably goes further to show the possibilities of sound and dialogue on the screen than any other film to date. The limitations and confinements which have marked other talkie offerings to date have been brushed aside by the producers of "In Old Arizona" and the result is refreshing, at least, to those who have become "fed up" already by the new and noisy cinema.

The plot and situations are by no means new, they have been done over and over again in the silent past, but there is a certain novelty and effectiveness to them in dialogue form, particularly in view of the fact that it is the first time film audiences have had an opportunity of viewing and hearing a sound film wherein much of the action is laid out of doors and in its natural settings. This allows of more sweep and movement in the telling of the story and undoubtedly enhances the entertainment value of the film.

In this respect the directors of "In Old Arizona" are to be highly commended for the naturalness and simplicity with which they have staged the action and handled the sound elements of the drama, making them synchronize with sincerity and a forceful yet restrained impressiveness that lifts the picture out of the ordinary run of raucous sound "entertainment."

Both R. A. Walsh and Irving Cummings are credited with the direction of "In Old Arizona," and it is therefore rather difficult for the reviewer to know upon which brow to pin the major laurel wreath. In Hollywood film circles it is generally reported that Cummings was responsible for the greater part of the production as it now stands, and this is

somewhat borne out by the fact that Cummings is known to have directed all those portions of the film in which Warner Baxter appears—and which are among the best in the picture.

"In Old Arizona" is rather sketchy and episodic in spots. It is marred somewhat by a weak ending, after building up to a climax which gave much promise of some kind of a powerful dramatic punch to come.

Warner Baxter gives one of the most polished and compelling performances that the talkies have had up to the present time. His voice seems ideally suited to microphone work.

Edmund Lowe delivers an interesting portrayal of the tough army sergeant but is completely excelled by Baxter. Dorothy Burgess is pleasing as far as her vocal efforts are concerned, but seems to lack a magnetic screen personality. She may improve with more work before the camera.

## Box Office Angle:

"In Old Arizona" is entirely different from any sound production released so far. This may help it at the box office. Film offers good exploitation possibilities and it will be interesting to note how the production draws when released throughout the country.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

## \$235 Monthly for Japanese Stars

Washington.—Leading film actors in Japan are paid an average of about \$235 a month according to advice to the M. P. Section of the Dept. of Commerce. The average cost of a picture is about \$2820. Of the 16 Japanese producers, six supply about three-quarters of the total productions. Most of the pictures consist of tragedies of Japanese life and episodes of their history.

**"THE AIR CIRCUS,"** a Fox production.

Directed by Lew Seiler and Howard Hawks.

Story by Graham Baker and Seton Miller.

Featuring Louise Dresser, Sue Carol, Arthur Lake and David Rollins.

## Critical Viewpoint:

"The Air Circus" is good audience material. The scenarists have supplied it with human interest and situations that give audiences a kick. Pictures dealing with aviation are popular at present and this one is not macknayed in its treatment.

"The Air Circus" has youth, thrills, laughs, mother love and the love of one buddy for another even to the point of risking his life. With such sure-fire material it cannot miss.

The air stuff is good, the acting and cast pleasing and although two directors have worked on this film the result is not choppy.

Louise Dresser, it is needless to write, gives a sincere and fine portrayal of a mother.

David Rollins and Arthur Lake respectively supply the fun and human qualities. Sue Carol is charming as the feminine member who supplies the love interest.

While the picture is not a great one, it is decidedly entertaining.

## Box Office Angle:

Not only because it treats of aviation, but due to the fact that it has a human note, "The Air Circus" should appeal to ninety percent of the theatregoers.

—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

## It's Getting Humorous

Minneapolis.—Fect-A-Tone, new synchronous device, has been placed on the market here by the Fect-A-Tone Co.

\* \* \*

## Garbo Film Titled

"Kiss of the East" is final title selected for Greta Garbo's new M-G-M film, which Sid-ney Franklin directed.

**"FURNACE TROUBLE"** Fox Movietone (short film).

Featuring Robert Benchley.

Directed by Jas. Parrott. Cast: Ethel Wales, Marguerite Churchill and Paul Nicholson.

Story by Robt. Benchley.

## Critical Viewpoint:

Although the skit is amusing and has some good laughs, the beholder feels that there is not enough of Robert Benchley. Actually his monologues are funnier and more satisfying. This does not reflect upon the rest of the cast, as they were capable, but Robert Benchley is the one theatregoers want to see and hear.

It is interesting to note that the biggest laughs come from the silent part of the picture—the things Benchley does rather than the things that are said, although much of the dialogue is humorous. In the small towns, husbands who come home from work tired, will appreciate the truth as well as the comedy of this Movietone. However, a new ending should be added to the production, as the chief flaw with it, is that it falls flat after the audience has been led to believe it is going to get a big laugh at some very funny gag.

## Box Office Angle:

Needless to write, with the demand for good shorts, "Furnace Trouble" will be very popular. Everyone is sure to find it entertaining, especially if the end is improved.

—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

## Sound for Germany

Berlin—Herbert Polke, owner of the Atnim Beba-Palastes, and associates, plan to erect Germany's first sound theatre at Potsdam next spring. The house will be equipped with Tonibild-Syndikat apparatus which is claimed to be interchangeable with other systems.



# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

## "TRUE HEAVEN," Fox production.

Directed by James Tingling.

Screen story by Dwight Cummins.

Featuring George O'Brien and Lois Moran.

### Critical Viewpoint:

For a war picture to be popular at this late date, it will have to have a big theme or something novel that has never been used in the thousands of war films. And espionage is not new. The story would have made a charming short feature but it is drawn out as a long production. The situations are not strong nor are there enough high spots to justify six reels.

The acting and photography are fine. The director at times has done a great deal with mild situations. But the material is not there and the picture is often dull. The spectator is able to tell what is going to happen, which kills suspense. When the title which told what true heaven meant when peace was on earth, I knew peace was going to end the photoplay. However, it was pretty silly to end the shooting sequence at the last second with Armistice being declared. Someone in the Fox organization should think up another ending.

George O'Brien has developed into an excellent actor. He has poise, dash and charm. It is only when he is given something very heroic to do, that he becomes very chesty. All heroes (in the movies) who are about to be shot refuse to have a handkerchief placed over their eyes. And this refusal is always done with a grand gesture. George O'Brien spoiled a fine performance by his mock heroic manner near the fadeout. At any moment I expected him to say "I regret I have only one life to give for my country."

Lois Moran looking very slender and lovely surprises the fans by her fine work. While Miss Moran has been improving steadily, there is more sincerity and lack of restraint in her work in "True Heaven."

There is a warmth to her love

scenes that is convincing without being too sexy.

### Box Office Angle:

"True Heaven" does not seem to be a good box-office title. Although the acting of Lois Moran and George O'Brien is fine, the picture does not treat of anything big enough to attract patrons. A mildly enjoyable cinema.

—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

### Gates Writing

#### New Warner Story

"Sonny Boy," an original story in which Warner Bros. propose to star the three-year-old David Lee, of "The Singing Fool" fame, will be written and adapted to the screen by Harvey Gates.

This writer scenarized the first all-talking picture produced, "The Terror." Since then five all-Vitaphone specials—mostly originals—have come from his typewriter. Namely, "The Redeeming Sin," "Stark Mad," "The Desert Song," "Midnight Taxi," and "From Headquarters."

"Sonny Boy," as previously announced, will be directed by Alan Crosland.

\* \* \*

### Paul Perez Completes

#### "Weary River" for F.N.

Paul Perez has completed titling Frank Lloyd's "Weary River," starring Richard Barthelmess. He is now writing the titles for First National's "Why Be Good?" starring Colleen Moore and directed by William A. Seiter.

\* \* \*

### Del Ruth Starting

#### On "Hottentot"

Roy Del Ruth is shortly to start actual production on "The Hottentot," a 100% Vitaphone talking picture, for Warner Brothers. Del Ruth just recently completed "The Desert Song."

## "THE WIND"

M-G-M production.

Directed by Victor Seastrom.

Screen story by Francis Marion from the novel by Dorothy Scarborough.

Starring Lillian Gish.

Featuring Lars Hanson, Montagu Love, Dorothy Cummings and Edward Earle.

### Critical Viewpoint:

Victor Seastrom again proves he is the star of any picture he directs. Seastrom presents his players as human beings (life-like), his atmosphere realistic and his film is always fine pictorially. "Wind" will be an interesting story to the people who cannot read Gene Stratton Porter and Harold Bell Wright. But, I am afraid the backbone of the nation will find it morbid.

The cinema is unrelieved by that box-office qualification—heart interest—it is a study of the effect of an inexorable climatic condition on an eastern girl—and the result is realistic.

The sterling actor Lars Hanson, gives the best performance in the production. Hanson has great acting power, and a personality with appeal. Hanson could be built into a big box-office attraction, yet the producers exploit thespians of lesser ability.

Lillian Gish plays Lillian Gish. Her work is good but it is essentially technique. While Miss Gish has fine moments she is lacking in the vital spark. This actress is an exponent of acting of the mind, not the emotions.

Montagu Love is very villainous. The rest of the cast is able.

### Box Office Angle:

Barring the metropolitan critics it is doubtful how many will appreciate this production. It is certainly not a small town picture. Theatregoers will find it too dreary for entertainment.

—ANABEL LANE.

## "LAUGHING AT DEATH," produced by F.B.O.

Directed by Wallace Fox. Story by Frank Howard Clark.

Cast: Bob Steele, Natalie Joyce, Hector V. Sarno, Ethan Law, Kai Schmidt, Armand Triller, Golden Wadhams and Captain Vic.

### Critical Viewpoint:

Thanks to somebody's courage to try it, directors are converting gun totin' Western actors into straight and costume leads and the experiments are proving not only advisable but considerably productive.

"Laughing at Death" is a mighty interesting and entertaining little picture and if F. B. O. keeps Bob Steele active in similarly peppy vehicles this young gent should click at the box office. Steele plays both a prince and a stoker on a ship with a freshness that is delightful and thanks to Director Wallace Fox's care in handling him and developing situations for him he carries the plot with him without it appearing too obvious or padded.

Fox has also managed to draw a line of distinction between the two characters so that the stoker doesn't appear to be a Chocolate soldier without a uniform, and, moreover he has not allowed any loose ends to detract from the story threads, which, in less capable hands might have been woven into a far less interesting fabric. Natalie Joyce is splendid, likewise Hector Sarno, and the photography by Virgil Miller has a quality seldom seen in F.B.O. pictures.

### Box Office Angle:

"Laughing at Death" has audience appeal and should make friends for itself with audiences and the exhibitor who seek this type of film fare.

\* \* \*

### Graham Titling "Sin Sister"

Garrett Graham is writing the titles for "The Sin Sister," a William Fox production.

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# THE FILM MERCURY

**VERITAS**



**VINCIT**

Vol. 9, No. 10  
Sixteen Pages

HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1929

*Edited by*  
TAMAR LANE

## **Tiffany-Stahl Shake-Up Coming?**

**These Fox-M-G-M Rumors**

## **Screen Now Needs New Voices**

**England's Brain Bankruptcy**

## **Ask Change In Casting Offices**

**A Defense Of Melodrama**

## **British vs. American Screen Stars**

## **REVIEWS**

**"Weary River"**

**"The Spite Marriage"**

**"Strong Boy"**

**"The Redeeming Sin"**

# England's Brain Bankruptcy— And the Solution

Herbert Thompson, editor of the London Film Weekly, has written an article entitled "Brain Bankruptcy" which is the most accurate and penetrating analysis of the British film problem which has been written to date. I am herewith reprinting some of his remarks:

"If the general quality of British films does not improve very soon, it seems certain that the production industry in this country will meet with disaster. This is a strong statement to make, but I feel convinced, after the most careful consideration, that it should be made.

"The worst enemy of British films is that section of the Press which showers indiscriminate praise upon work of mediocre and even atrocious quality. Admittedly this praise is given in the best of good faith, and in an endeavor to encourage exhibitors to show and the public to see British films.

"But what is the effect of this boosting of bad goods likely to be? Firstly, the public will go to see these highly praised films, and if they are able to sit through them will come away disgusted, and spread the story among their friends that the British film revival is a farce. Two or three disappointments of this kind and much of the good work of the past few years will be thrown away, and cinemas showing British films will again be in the position to say: 'I don't want to show British films, because when I do my patrons stay away.'

"A further and almost as serious effect is one of which I have had many personal examples. A bad film is lauded to the skies, and the company which produced it and the man who directed it walk about with their heads in the clouds talking of the masterpiece they have created. They then proceed to produce further 'masterpieces' on the same lines, blissfully unconscious of their shortcomings, and imagining themselves to be film geniuses of the first water.

"It is a sad truth that the majority of British film directors are absolutely unable to see the faults of their own work, although in many instances it is impossible to find even one virtue in their films. I have seen several British films lately which in direction, acting, setting, photography, and general technique are far below the standard created by the old London Film Company before the war. In fact, the policy of some British film directors today reminds me of a 1928 young man with an inexplicable fondness for the methods of 1898.

"Instead of the situation improving, I can foresee it steadily getting worse, unless there is some very strong plain speaking.

"There are men making films today who lack nearly every necessary quality for creative work of this kind, and it must be remembered that in most cases they are spending money which has been provided by the public.

"British films are in the melting pot, and it is time every film company took stock of its personnel, ruthlessly dispensed with the incompetents, found brains capable of constructive thought, and generally put its house in order. The form of brain bankruptcy which is all too prevalent will, if it is not cured at once, result in a serious setback, if not in the extinction of British films.

"Fortunately there are one or two British film companies who are tackling the problem courageously, and we have a few directors capable of thinking for themselves and also of putting their ideas into practice. Unhappily, the good work of these companies and men is going to be adversely affected by the 'praise everything British' brigade.

Mr. Thompson has stated the British film problem in a nutshell and he is to be applauded for his fearlessness and candor.

To add my personal opinions to the proposition, I would say that England's "brain bankruptcy" is largely due to the country's narrow and absurd policy of endeavoring to limit its cinema brains to citizens of Great Britain.

It has not been native born Americans who have placed America in control of the film industry. It has been the *brains of the world*, imported to the United States from every country on the globe, and used in conjunction and in co-operation with the brains of Uncle Sam.

The trouble with the British film industry is that it is attempt-

ing to lift itself by its own boot straps. What England needs is outside brain power to work in conjunction with its own home talent. Clever and experienced photoplay experts should be imported from America to aid in giving British films the universal appeal which they now lack.

Such a man, for instance, as J. D. Williams, of World Wide Pictures, is doing more for the English film industry than any five men have ever done before, and Mr. Williams is an Australian who got the greater part of his film experience in the United States. It is this knowledge of American motion picture affairs that is aiding Williams to accomplish results that would be beyond the average Englishman. Every British studio should have men on their advisory and producing staffs who know the American film game from A to Z.

The same condition applies to screen players. England is making the error of banning American players from its shores, in the hope that by such a ridiculous method British players can be forced down the throats of British theatregoers, whether they like them or not. By compelling its producers to use all-British casts, England is limiting the international box office appeal of its productions, because exhibitors throughout the world will rarely book a film unless a good percentage of the players are established favorites with their theatre patrons. British films with all-British casts have comparatively no sales value in America.

England should include three or four American screen players in every film it produces along with the same number of British players. By this method the British film would find a better market in America—providing, of course, it carried universal appeal—and at the same time the American public would become acquainted with the British players in the production. After these British players had appeared in several films in this fashion they would become widely known to the American film trade and would finally be able to star without the support of American screen players.

American films have international box office power because their casts are composed of the favorites of Germany, France, England, Russia, Italy, Sweden, Denmark and almost every important country on the face of the earth. Americans might take the narrow viewpoint that by paying huge salaries to Emil Jannings, Greta Garbo, Reginald Denny, Charlie Chaplin, Vilma Banky, Ronald Colman, Dolores Del Rio, Clive Brook, Ramon Novarro, Ralph Forbes and scores of other players and directors, big and small, it is depriving its native talent of many thousands of dollars a week, but America has been intelligent enough to realize that by including these foreign players in its films it has increased the earning power of those films ten fold and in the long run has brought greater benefits to its American film workers by virtue of tremendously increased production.

England can do the same thing—if it will be far-sighted enough to import brains and talent from other lands.

—Tamar Lane.

**HARRISON WILEY**  
ART DIRECTOR

"Columbia Pictures"



## ANABEL LANE Says

Rex Ingram's latest production "The Three Passions" is disappointing. Ingram's pictures, since he has been making them in Europe, have been steadily growing worse and worse. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was not happy with its experience producing in Italy. In fact the only film that came out of Europe (sponsored by an American company) that was highly successful was "The White Sister." Persons connected with the picture claim it was the high courage, spirit and ingenuity of Charles H. Duell that made the feat possible. Considering the noteworthy cinemas Duell made—"Tol'able David," "The Enchanted Cottage," "The Bright Shawl," "Fury," etc., it is easy to believe he was responsible for being the first and only American to make a successful cinema in Europe.

After Vera Reynolds appeared in "Corporal Kate," I expected this actress to be recognized as the splendid little actress she is. But sometimes things don't happen as they should. In that picture Miss Reynolds gave an outstanding performance. She ran the gamut of emotions and was appealing to the eye. As well as being one of Hollywood's capable actresses Vera Reynolds is one of the finest persons here and we are rooting for her. It is said she may sign with one of the big companies which gives its actresses a chance. If so she will more than make good.

Jim Tully is back in our midst again and Dame Rumor is busy spreading the news that he is working on a novel. Another story is that he is dramatizing "Shanty Irish." This I know, that Tully is through writing ironical articles about motion picture personalities and people in other walks of life, as he has just refused an offer from one of the biggest magazines to do four interviews.

## Special Numbers From English Trade Journals

Two British film journals, "The Film Renter" and "Bioscope" have issued special numbers dealing with British film affairs. These numbers are bulky in size and contain a very generous percentage of advertising, indicating that business is on the pick up on the other side of the Atlantic.

Both journals also contain a number of constructive articles on various phases of the present international film situation. As a whole, these special issues reflect much credit to both "The Bioscope" and "The Film Renter" and would indicate that both journals have the confidence of the British film trade.

\* \* \*

## Brown In M-G-M Sound Feature?

Joe E. Brown may be signed by M-G-M for a feature role in a forthcoming talkie to be produced at the Culver City studio, according to report.

Brown is now being starred in a series of pictures by Tiffany-Stahl.

\* \* \*

## Pathe Talker Titled

"Strange Cargo" is the new title of Pathe's first all-talking picture, originally called "The Missing Man."

\* \* \*

## Bushman 8 Weeks

### More on R-K-O

Providence.—Francis X. Bushman, Jr., appearing in a mystery sketch at the Albee, has about eight more weeks' bookings on the R-K-O time. With him in the act is his sister, Lenore. In early summer Bushman will return to the Coast to work in pictures.

Jim Tully told me that the articles were a phase he passed through in his growth and he will do other work now. There are many who will regret this as Tully depicts characters more graphically and penetratingly than any other writer we know. George Jean Nathan in the American Mercury states that Tully wrote the best interview published in an American magazine.

## Rumors of New Shake-Up In Tiffany-Stahl Ranks

Despite denials from Tiffany-Stahl studio officials that any changes in administration are contemplated, new rumors were heard this week to the effect that an important shake-up will shortly take place in the T-S ranks.

Chief among these reports is one to the effect that M. H. Hoffman's interests in the company have been bought out by the Fisher Bros., millionaire auto magnates, who are also interested in the Radio Corporation. It is further asserted that with the completion of this deal Hoffman will withdraw from Tiffany-Stahl.

The Fisher Bros. are closely associated with L. A. Young, financial backer of Tiffany-Stahl, and it is said to have been Young who influenced the Fishers to buy into T-S.

In line with these reports comes the further rumor that

L. A. Young has just arrived here to bring about changes in production affairs and there is the likelihood that John Stahl's interest in the company may also be purchased. It is said that Stahl has already been approached regarding the selling of his contract, which is reported to still have two years to go.

According to this week's rumor, Stahl has refused to withdraw from Tiffany-Stahl unless he is transferred to an important position in either F. B. O. or Pathe, which the Fisher Bros. are associated with by virtue of their stock holdings in RCA.

There are all sorts of rumors in the air concerning Tiffany-Stahl, none of which can be vouched for, but it is believed that the real facts will be disclosed within the next two weeks.

## Those Fox-M-G-M Rumors

With M-G-M officials issuing constant and emphatic denials in regard to the reported taking over of M-G-M by Fox, rumors persist on every hand that there is in reality a shred of truth in the report and that such a deal is far from an improbability.

In some quarters it is observed that, notwithstanding protest to the contrary, a deal is already underway that will eventually bring about the passing of M-G-M into the control of Fox.

One rumor that was current on the boulevards this week is to the effect that Fox auditors are even now engaged in going over the M-G-M books with the object of ascertaining the values and assets of the M-G-M holdings.

Another development which has stimulated further belief in the possibility of the deal was the arrival in Hollywood this week of William Fox, who has not been a visitor in this city for over three years.

The exclusive big news "scoop" recently printed by the Film Mercury in regard to Louis B. Mayer's resignation from M-G-M to take the post of American Ambassador to Turkey has also been semi-officially admitted during the past few days. This lends even further support to the contention that radical changes of some nature are about to take place in the M-G-M organization.

\* \* \*

## Vilma Banky Film Titled

"This Is Heaven" is the title which Samuel Goldwyn has selected for the new Vilma Banky picture which has recently been completed on the Coast. This was filmed under the temporary title of "Fifth Avenue."

\* \* \*

## British Story Co. Formed

London.—British Movietales has been formed to provide original stories for the screen. The company also will do adaptations and continuities.



## Tells Why Theatres Suffer

In explanation of what's wrong with the legitimate theatre business in New York, a theatregoer wrote the following letter to St. John Ervine, dramatic critic of the N. Y. World:

"We are a couple of moderate means, both of us passionately fond of the theatres, and by that I do not mean musical comedy but straight plays.

"We have seen one play, 'The Royal Family,' in about a year, and when we did get the seats we were treated as though we were lucky to be so blessed by the box office officials. Mr. Ervine, we are so sick of going to the box office asking courteously for a moderate priced seat—not the cheapest—and having the creature of the box office look us over languidly as though we were some strange specimen and then in a loud voice haughtily inform us that there are no cheap seats, merely \$—, naming the highest price.

"Of course we walk away, and that is possibly two or three days before the date we requested.

"It is bewildering. I do not know what is the matter. Why are the theatrical men complaining when we cannot get a modest priced seat from \$2 to \$2.50 or \$3 at the box office? For instance, 'Rain or Shine' (since closed) was up in Gray's at a cut-rate price on Tuesday. It not being convenient for me to see it Tuesday evening, I went Wednesday evening to the box office. The man there haughtily informed me that there were no seats. This in the face of the fact that they were closing in a week or so and that they were patronizing the cut-rate agencies. So we went to a movie, although we both detest movies, considering the frightful maudlin drivel that is handed out at them.

"But what can one do? We go to the theatre as a luxury once in a great while. If they would only come down in their prices we would eschew movies altogether and patronize the theatre exclusively. Of

## Selling Stock for Polish Film

Berlin.—For the purpose of opposing what it calls films with a German tendency, the Polish Union for the Defense of the Western Borders has conceived the idea of organizing a picture-producing company which is to turn out a movie calculated to prove that the real cradle of the Polish nation was located along the western frontier. It is raising the necessary capital by selling shares to the public at the equivalent of \$11.50 apiece.

\* \* \*

## Is Latest Barrymore Picture Great?

Latest rumor has it that John Barrymore-Lubitsch picture is not up to expectations. Which proves that the old adage there should only be one boss is right. Many say Herr Lubitsch is not to blame—that the volatile John wanted his way—and got it. After having seen "The Patriot" one wonders why even an actor would not place himself in the hands of some fine director.

On the other hand reports about the latest Fairbanks opus are most encouraging. Those who have caught the preview say it is far better than "The Three Musketeers."

\* \* \*

## Conference In West Indies

At the second West Indies' Conference held recently, which was attended by delegates from the Bahamas, Barbadoes, Bermuda, Jamaica, Trinidad, the Leeward Islands, the Windward Islands, as well as British Guiana, one of the subjects down on the agenda for discussion was the establishment of a quota system.

It is suggested that films, comparatively harmless in Western countries, constitute a danger to the morals of the natives in those villages where a white man is seldom seen.

course the theatrical producer will receive that statement with an ironical smile, but let him remember that there are thousands of couples and families that feel the way we do. They are being forced into the cheaper movies."

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## "Waterloo" In Munich

London.—"Waterloo," produced by the Emelka Company and directed by Karl Grune, is playing in Munich. Reports from Germany are that those who have seen the film claim it is great. It cost over a million marks and treats of the battle of Waterloo. As shown in Germany it gives the impression that Blucher alone won this great battle, but away from the Fatherland another version will probably be released.

\* \* \*

## James Burroughs At Chinese Theatre

James Burroughs, well known tenor, will appear in the prologue at the Chinese Theatre with the showing of the picture, "Broadway Melody." Mr. Burroughs appears in the film as well as being heard on the stage.

\* \* \*

## Merrill Back

Walter Merrill, juvenile leading man of the screen, has returned to Hollywood after taking a six-months course in the intricacies of talking motion pictures in New York.

## Screen Needs New Voices

The younger players both men and women, but more especially men with personality and talent, will get good "breaks" this year at the studios. The old line guard of "box-office bets" have hit the slide and are sliding rapidly downward. New faces will replace them, many predict.

While the talkies have ushered in actors with voice training, mostly from the stage, these, in the opinion of many, will not survive long but will be eliminated just as soon as some of the unknowns of the moment get a chance to show their mettle. Many of these newcomers have good voices for the talkies, while their voices might be a dismal failure on the speaking stage. The "Mike" does not require booming voices to reach the last row in the orchestra or gallery, but a restrained, well modulated one, that is clear and distinct. Present cases prove this.

Many of the local producers are signing up potential talent, using them in pictures and gradually building them up to play leading roles instead of placing them in leading roles at the offset, which has been the ruination of many a promising player. Give them the experience first and later featured roles. The best training a newcomer can get is with some independent director or producer who will give them a chance to make good and the benefit in lighting and story as well as direction.

\* \* \*

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# THE FILM PARADE

*As seen by* RICHARD WATTS JR.

Photoplay Editor, *New York Herald-Tribune*

During the past week, screen versions of two novels, which, in one way or another, managed to become famous, reached Broadway. About all they have in common, in addition to the fact that both of them have been made into motion pictures, is that each was the work of a naturalized Englishman and is romantic in mood. I suspect I am the only person in the world who thinks both of them are grand books. They are Conrad's "The Rescue" and Michael Arlen's "The Green Hat."

Whenever a novel of some importance is brought to the screen a number of highly controversial problems are bound to arise. Is it possible to transfer a novelist from book to screen and retain his story, his characters, his spirit and his essential mood to any degree intact? What liberties should the adaptation be permitted? Should the translation be literal or free? Is it, as a matter of fact, important or advisable that an attempt be made to capture the qualities of the original, or should the narrative of the novelist be used as a sort of springboard for a distinctly new creation? It is barely possible that some light may be cast on these problems by a survey of "The Rescue" and "The Green Hat"—or "A Woman of Affairs" as they call it on the screen—though I doubt it.

In both cases, it seems evident that an honest effort has been made to remain faithful to the letter and the spirit of the originals. In both pictures, certain telescoping of the action and the characters was naturally found necessary for various reasons, but it is clear that in each case the adapter and the director strove for fidelity. There is, however, the immense difference that "The Rescue" was far more difficult to adapt than was the Michael Arlen novel; which may make

it a bit difficult to draw any general laws from a consideration of the two photoplays.

It is, of course, unnecessary to remind you that "The Rescue" is an infinitely more subtle, more profound and more sensitive work, one whose spirit is vastly more elusive for potential captors, than is the Arlen romance. Certainly, too, the retention of the essential mood is far more important to its success as a picture, since without it, "The Rescue" comes out in plot outline as a commonplace enough melodrama about love and duty, while "The Green Hat," even in story, is a good sentimental love tragedy.

At the outset, the adapters of the Conrad tale made a fatal mistake. The focal character, Mrs. Travers, the cool, inscrutable, enigmatic lady, a fatigued romantic egoist, who causes unwittingly the conflict in the soul of Captain Tom Lingard, the active romantic egoist, was changed into the familiar Bored Society Woman of film tradition; a conventional seductress of the sort you have seen in several thousand photoplays. As written and as played by the unfortunate Miss Lily Damita, the part loses all its distinctiveness and by that loss the drama is divested, at one stroke, of most of its essential point (At this point I would like to take time out a moment for a digression and wonder audibly how Miss Damita, so handsome a young lady in person could have been photographed so unalluringly).

Of course, to capture the mood of romantic honor, the note of ineffable sadness and high nobility, the brooding intensity of a Conrad novel in a motion picture is one of the most tremendous tasks you can well imagine. When, therefore, a central character is as distorted as was that of Mrs. Travers and the smaller per-

sonages of the drama are changed from striking, colorful people to unimportant lay figures, the picture starts with a handicap that is unconquerable. It is not surprising that "The Rescue" despite competent direction and excellent photography, turned out to be a disappointing photoplay and an ordinary melodrama.

It is frequently proclaimed, I know, that the subtle intangibility of the Conrad mood makes it impossible to film. While recognizing the difficulty, though, remembrance that something of the proper spirit was captured in both "White Shadows in the South Seas" and "Mare Nostrum"—neither of which had the good fortune to be written by the mighty Pole—makes me to suspect that considerably more of the correct manner might have been gained had more skill and understanding been spent on the task.

Of far simpler stuff is "The Green Hat," which faced chiefly the handicaps of censorship and Haysian disapproval in its transfer from book and stage to screen. The noble Mr. Hays regarded the Arlen romance with considerable mistrust, you will remember, and refused to permit to be filmed. Graciously giving in to his wishes, the producers thoughtfully changed the title of the picture to "A Woman of Affairs," gave new names to the characters and went right ahead with their production.

There was also the difficulty that one of the important characters killed himself because he had contracted a disease that shall be nameless here. It seemed pretty censorable material and so the cause of his suicide was cheerfully changed to embezzlement. Considering what would probably have happened to the picture at the hand of the police, the change can be accepted as a sensible and logical

one.

After these variations from the original, the producers proceeded to make the rest of the picture amazingly faithful to its original. Some one, who unfortunately receives no screen credit, made a splendid adaptation that retains the spirit and the letter of the romance and does so with remarkable dramatic effectiveness. Clarence Brown directed with taste, judgment, sanity and high skill. Greta Garbo, perfectly cast as the gallant, tragic lady of the green hat, gives one of the most moving and beautiful performances within memory; the supporting cast, including such impressive names as John Gilbert, Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Lewis Stone, John Mack Brown, Hobart Bosworth and Dorothy Sebastian, is excellent and the captions strike the correct note. The result is both a faithful adaptation and a really moving romantic tragedy.

Considering the comparative difficulties faced by the producers of the two works, comparison is perhaps a bit unfair. Perhaps, though, there may be some lesson to be drawn by noting that the film which adhered to the spirit of the original was excellent both as adaptation and as screen drama, while the one that lacked fidelity, was not only a failure at transcribing a novel, but also turned out to be little better than mediocre drama.

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# Production Boom In Europe

London.—The end of 1928, which has been marked by the decision of the German Government to reintroduce the "Kontingent," though in a modified form, sees a most determined attack being made by British exhibitors on the British quota act. The Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association, which supported the quota act, is now becoming alarmed over some of its consequences. The attack on the measure is headed by Sir Oswald Stoll, who is decidedly a force in both the production and exhibition of British films. He condemns the quota act partly because it bears heavily on exhibitors, but his strongest argument is that it is playing into the hands of American producers. He recommends its replacement by a reel tax on foreign films.

Supporters of the quota point to the fact that since it was enacted by Parliament the English film industry has risen from next to nothingness to a position where it commands \$125,000,000 of capital, all subscribed by the British public. They note with triumph that 125 new British pictures were produced during the year and that the studios are at that only just getting into their stride. What they do not say is whether the British investors of this \$125,000,000 will ever get their money back or how many of the 125 new pictures were really worth making.

But what they forgot to say has now been pointed out by Sir Oswald Stoll. His remarks, as a truthful picture of the English film industry at the end of 1928, are worth quoting.

"The chief concern of the English cinema industry," he says, "is the possible shortage of attractive films. Much money has been invested in the making of British films under the encouragement of the films act. These pictures, in the main, have not sold well to exhibitors because more have been made than the exhibitors

wanted and more than the exhibitors, under the films act, are forced to take. Those that have been taken, British exhibitors claim, are, with exceptions, injuring their business. British pictures, whether they are topical or not, have to be held in stock for months before they are used. Then the use of them is only of a piecemeal character, which takes months or years to cover the ground. After being made they must be trade-shown before they can be sold at all. No orders can be received to make pictures or to buy them except under these restrictive conditions, which hold up for many months the money of everybody concerned. These conditions involve eventual restriction of output and disorganization of technical staff, as well as a hold-up of money that should be turned over rapidly. The films act is to blame.

"All this must tend to prevent the creation of a reliable supply of good British pictures which could fill any shortage of good American films. Already, because of the advent of sound, such a shortage threatens. This shortage it will not be possible for the British industry to take advantage of owing to the lock-up of funds. The British industry has been made the football of two great electric combines, with im-

mense capital resources, who might have drawn the films act for their own ends. Exhibitors know that either good silent pictures or good sound pictures will fill theatres when the public have the money in their pockets.

"Exhibitors can save themselves by getting the films act amended in time to enable them to be sure of a good supply of good British pictures if everything else should fail them. The films act should be amended to include a reel tax of one shilling per reel per day on all foreign films exhibited. The proceeds of the tax, less administrative charges, would be devoted wholly to making up losses on British pictures judged to be good ones, and the money would be given with the proviso that it would be used for more productions, so that a constant supply of good British pictures would soon be in existence whether they were shown by exhibitors or not. In course of time all of them would be exhibited, first because they would be good pictures, second because they would be of public interest, and

## "Patriot" Wins Best Film Vote

"The Patriot," slated by The Film Mercury as the outstanding cinema achievement of 1928, has also been awarded the first plume in the nationwide poll of film critics just completed by The Film Daily.

Here is the way the critics voted on the first ten pictures of the year:

PICTURE	VOTES
The Patriot.....	210
Sorrell and Son.....	180
Last Command.....	135
Four Sons.....	125
Street Angel.....	124
The Circus.....	122
Sunrise .....	199
The Crowd.....	105
King of Kings.....	99
Sadie Thompson.....	95

\* \* \*

### Swiss Company Formed

Washington—Society Financiers of Colored Films (Cicol-fina) was formed with a reported capital of \$95,000, advises the M. P. Section of the Dept. of Commerce. The company plans, activity in industrial and commercial moving pictures, especially color photography.

third because they would be tax free.—John MacCormack in the New York Times.

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# A Defense of Melodrama

In the vocabulary of theatre-goers, no words has suffered more from iniquitous degeneration than the adjective *melodramatic*. Careless writers are now accustomed to call a play melodramatic when they wish to indicate that it is bad; whereas they might with equal logic try to damn a play by calling it tragic or comic or poetic. There are good tragedies, good melodramas and bad melodramas; and it is no more sound to assume that all melodramas are bad than to assume that all tragedies are good. But the very word *melodrama* has so fallen into disrepute nowadays when a man puts forth a melodrama he usually pretends that it is something else, and writes in a few extraneous passages to justify his press-agent in advertising it as a social study or a comedy.

Consequently, if we are to converse with any seriousness about the noble art of melodrama, we must agree at the outset to divest the word of all derogatory connotation. Most people consider it pedantic to insist on definitions; and the minority of writers who refuse to use such an adjective as *romantic* without explaining what they mean by it are usually labeled academic—which is supposed to be synonymous with dull. Yet a great deal of the fret and bother of the world would be averted if people in general would only educate themselves to definition. For instance, if only the socialists would agree upon a definition of *socialism* and formulate it in a single paragraph, we should all be able to determine at a glance whether or not we wanted to be socialists; and this procedure would save reformers the expense of printing innumerable pamphlets and spare us a great deal of mouthing and sawing the air.

By *melodrama*—if we use the word nicely—is signified a serious play in which the incidents determine and control the characters. There are, to be sure, a few other abiding features of melodrama that should

be accounted for in any final definition of the form, and these we shall consider in due time; but for the present this primary principle will serve to convince us that melodrama not only has an excuse for being but is in reality one of the noblest types of art. In both tragedy and comedy the characters control the plot; in farce, as in melodrama, a train of incidents is foreordained and the characters are subsequently woven into the pattern of destiny that has been predetermined for them; and it is clearly reasonable for us to accept that convention of criticism which regards tragedy and comedy as more heroic than their sister arts. But life itself is more frequently melodramatic than tragic, and much more often farcical than comic; in fact, the utter dominance of character over coincidence is so rare in the record of humanity as to call for chapter-headings in our histories; and since the purpose of the drama—like that of all the other arts—is to represent the *truth* of life, the theatre must always rely on farce and melodrama to complete its comment on humanity. Much of our life—in fact, by far the major share—is casual instead of causal. It is this immutable truth—the persistency of chance in the serious concerns of life, and the inevitable influence of accident on character—that melodrama aims to represent; and to damn melodramas as an inconsiderable type of art is to deny the divinity of Fortune, whom the wisest of all men, in the seventh canto of his *Hell*, exalted “with the other Deities.”

It is because melodrama casts its emphasis on incident instead of upon character, that it has been in every age the most popular of all the types of drama. Each of us is avid of adventure; and to find ten dollars in the street strikes us as more interesting than to earn ten dollars by accomplishing our share in the established division of labor. Similarly—though in this we are not logical—it strikes us as more interesting to be gagged

and bound, and rescued by the provident police, than to quarrel with our wife or husband over the duration of the boiling of an egg and to purchase forgiveness by the gift of an ostrich feather, or a box of trust-made but untrustworthy cigars. Though in our waking senses we may condemn that Deity whose name is Fortune, we all worship her in dreams; and in the theatre we bless the happy chance that agreeably rewards the innocent and consigns the villainous to jail.

In our own lives, we remember what has happened to us, by some lucky or unlucky accident, more vividly than we remember what we were: our past selves are clouded with oblivion but our past adventures float before the eyes of memory as stories instant and alive. So, in our experiences of theatre-going, we forget characters—like Hedda Gabler—but we re-

## Big Talkie Merger

A consolidation or merger between the Acoustic Products, and the General Talking Pictures, Inc., taking in the three talking outfits, Bristolphone, De Forest Phonofilm and Sonora, is under way.

member incidents — like that moment in *The Two Orphans* when the lost Louise is heard singing in the street and the incarcerated Henriette is stopped at the door by the entering guards while she hears her sister being dragged unwillingly away to a continuance of beggary. Adventure moves us more than character; because adventure is always with us—it is often an adventure to look over the edge of the morning paper at the person seated opposite in the subway—but character is an element of destiny of which we grow aware only in the small minority of incidents which are commanded and controlled.—*Clayton Hamilton in "Studies in Stagecraft."*

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## Is There A Future for Color Cinematography

By GLEN GANO

The first important thing to consider in photographing color motion pictures is the number of colors that we have to use. It has been conceded by a good many experiments all over the world that the human eye is susceptible to colors to the extent of over three hundred different shades of color. By that I don't mean just a light or dark shade of the same color, but colors that are different wave lengths, and it is the wave length that makes the color a different hue. It causes the color to have a different diffraction value, but we will not go into detail here in regard to diffraction and wave-length. I'll relieve your mind right now, we do not have to use that many colors if we did, it would be impossible. The painter has to start with nine, and with them he can derive at anything he desires, and in regard to the motion picture emulsion, there are seven, namely; violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. And for all practical purposes, they are reduced to three, or what is commonly called the primary colors, red, yellow and blue-violet. The blues and violets are so closely related they are taken as one. For our purpose this is what composes the base of the best color photography today, which is known as three-color photography. The reason the number of colors can be reduced to a minimum is because each intermediate color on either side of the three primary colors are taken care of by their reflection factor in percentage of density, and gives it the effect of its particular shade or hue of color on the screen by being either subdued or pronounced as the case may be. In other words, each varied shade is so closely related to the basic colors that they give the proper effect.

The effect that distance color

has on the eye will help us to know more about it. The eye has an accommodation for color, in other words, it focuses upon a certain color, and to perceive another color at the opposite end of the spectrum, so to speak, when it focuses on red, and blue suddenly flashes on the screen, the focus is thrown at a considerable distance away, although if they are on the screen at the same time, the eye will naturally focus on the nearest object, being red, and the farthest object, being blue, will be thrown way in the distance. Painters found this out hundreds of years ago, before scientists discovered the wave length theory that explained the reason for it. Blue, when placed on the canvas seemed farther away than red, so, for instance, if they painted a woman in the foreground, they used a predominant color of red, maybe a touch of orange, yellow, or perhaps green, and used a blue background. By this, you can see why principally the director and cameraman should know the fundamentals of color, to O.K. the costumes, scenery and backgrounds according to their color values in relation to their place in the color scale or spectrum from the shortest wave length (blue) to the (red), the longest wavelength. In fact red is approximately twice as long as blue. Even the so-called artists that plaster bill-boards with three sheets have learned these secrets, they may not know the exact reasons why, but they do know by practice that it works out that way, and they are willing to accept it as facts. They know that blue causes the background to look farther away, and red causes a figure to suggest nearness. The reason for this is that the eye fools the brain, so to speak, that is, when you look at a red object the eye adjusts itself to the wave-length of red, and when you look at a blue object, the eye adjusts itself again to the wave length that constitutes blue.

(Continued next week)

### Theatre for Chefoo, China

Washington.—Chefoo, a city of approximately 150,000, now has its own theatre, reports the M. P. Section of the Dept. of Commerce. Pictures shown are generally versions of Chinese historical stories and are rented at a price of \$150 for four days.

### Fox Won't Build

Chicago.—Talk of a big Fox house here built in conjunction with Marks Bros. is regarded as idle, in view of the friendly relations between Fox & B. & K. which is resulting in plenty of Fox bookings for loop theatres.

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# British vs. American Screen Stars

A discussion was recently started in *The Film Weekly*, London cinema periodical, on the subject of the talents of American screen stars as compared to those appearing in British productions. The proposition drew quite a response from British theatregoers. Here are some of the comments, as reported in *The Film Weekly*:

"Can any of your readers give me a list of twenty artists of any nationality, at present appearing in British productions who are as good-looking or as talented as the following: Vilma Banky, Evelyn Brent, Dolores Costello, Dolores Del Rio, Janet Gaynor, Esther Ralston, Laura La Plante, Colleen Moore, Marion Davies, Clara Bow, Clive Brook, Richard Arlen, Charles Farrell, Ronald Colman, Charles Rogers, Ramon Novarro, Rod La Rocque, Reginald Denny, John Barrymore, Ralph Forbes?"

This challenge from a correspondent, J. O'Neill, was published in our issue of December 31 last, and was immediately answered by scores of our readers, who sent us lists of British artists. Some of these letters were published in our last issue, but recent posts have brought us a further immense expression of opinion.

Analysing this correspondence, we have found that a huge majority of these letters champion British artists, while at the same time insisting that they are not "British film-mad." Their lists name as all as many as ninety-three actors and actresses. Of these surprising few are of foreign nationality, although appearing in English films—and apart from Carl Brisson no foreign-born artists receive many votes.

Nearly all our correspondents repeat J. O'Neill's words—"as talented and as good-looking"—before giving their lists, thus suggesting that they have given some thought to making their selections and have not placed down haphazardly their own "favorites." The following is a table of the stars who are

mentioned most often in the lists, placed roughly in order of popularity:

Ivor Novello, Betty Balfour, Jameson Thomas, Isabel Jeans, Mabel Poulton, John Stuart, Henry Edwards, Robin Irvine, Estelle Brody, Carl Brisson, Henry Victor, Percy Marmont, Lillian Hall-Davis, Eve Grey, Benita Hume, Matheson Lang, Dorothy Boyd, Miles Mander, Lillian Rich, Annette Benson and Warwick Ward.

The remainder are fairly recent "discoveries," but have obviously obtained a firm hold on the public's affection. It is surprising to find names such as Robin Irvine, Mabel Poulton, Benita Hume, Miles Mander and Carl Brisson among the most popular—considering, of course, the short time in which they have been prominent.

This, however, is a "sign of the times." The British industry is having to create a new generation of artists, and seems to be succeeding. Younger players who received several votes were Pat and Brian Aherne, Chili Boucher and Elga Brink, Alf Goddard, Madeleine Carroll and Alexandre D'Arcy—all of whom are products of the past two years activity.

More than sixty other artists were mentioned. Not more than a dozen of these were of foreign nationality; and we are thus left nearly fifty actors and actresses, mostly young, who are considered by sections of the public to be equal in ability and looks to the established of Hollywood.

One of the most interesting letters comes from Miss G. Edwards, of Cheam, Surrey, who begins by saying that her favorite star is American, but, in the interest of fair play, wishes to compare a list of English players with that given by J. O'Neill:

(1) Clive Brook: excellent, but so is Carlyle Blackwell, whose dramatic abilities are equal to his good looks.

(2) Richard Arlen, whose clean, natural boyishness is repeated in Haddon Mason, one

of the most English looking of our actors.

(3) Charles Farrell, whose undeniable charm is echoed in Carl Brisson.

(4) Ronald Colman, whose reserve and fine acting make him brother to Jameson Thomas.

(5) Charles Rogers, the ideal college lead. Well, Robin Irvine is equally ideal and is much better looking.

(6) Ramon Novarro, overflowing with talents and good looks, would surely find a kindred spirit in Ivor Novello.

(7) Rod La Rocque, whose looks are not nearly so good nor is his style so dashing as those of John Stuart.

(8) Reginald Denny, amusing, but not one-eighth so versatile as Syd Chaplin.

(9) John Barrymore, who leaves me cold. We can produce as fine a character actor—Matheson Lang.

(10) Ralph Forbes, he just makes one like him—so does Pat Aherne.

(1) Vilma Banky, quite charming, but not nearly so beautiful as Juliette Compton.

(2) Evelyn Brent, clever and sophisticated but I prefer the worldliness of Annette Benson.

(3) Dolores Costello. Words fail me, for any of our actresses can surpass her, for she is neither clever nor beautiful.

(4) Dolores Del Rio, a great actress—her rival is fascinating Isabel Jeans.

(5) Janet Gaynor, youth and a great personality. Our "Tessa" can equal her in every way—Mabel Poulton.

(6) Esther Ralston, the screen's prettiest girl. Eve Grey is a close second.

(7) Laura La Plante, quite sweet, but not so clever as our own Lillian Hall-Davis can be.

(8) Colleen Moore, one of the cleverest actresses in the world. She ties with Betty Balfour for talent and vivacity.

(9) Marion Davies, beautiful and bright—so is Maria Corda.

(10) Clara Bow, the "It" girl. Although amateur at present, Audree Sayre promises to have her full share of "It."

Another letter points out that "four stars of the stars given in J. O'Neill's list—Clive Brook, Reginald Denny, Ronald Colman, and Ralph Forbes—are British and not American, although appearing in U.S.A. films."

Those, however, who support the challenge are most outspoken. One correspondent, living in Wimbledon Park, Surrey, states—"It is hardly fair to despise American films merely because they are American. Also, it is a fallacy to regard British films as equal to them, for I am sure that were the cinemas to show only British productions the number of film enthusiasts would greatly diminish."

"The American artists have more vivacity than our own. Most British films are decidedly insipid and do not contain sufficient thrill to hold the public. Is it because the artists are incompetent, or because they are handled by incapable directors?"

Several letters admit that British films are not so fast in action as the American, but in each case they take care to point out that the actors are potentially as good as those in Hollywood, and predict that another year's work under good directors will raise many of the younger people.

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## Ask Change In Casting Offices

Extra and small part players are said to be anxious to get studios to install two casting directors instead of one as the case is now. The male players claim the men give them no consideration but center all their attention on the female of the species.

The idea advanced is that a woman cast the women and a man cast the men for pictures. In this way no discrimination would be shown, and further the extras claim that women casting directors, and there are several, treat them with kindness and respect, while some of the men do not.

Some of the male and female stars look kindly towards a dual casting director system instead of leaving the whole job up to one man, and usually an incompetent assistant. With the event of talkies and the anxiety for players with stage training it might not be a bad idea for studios to employ a woman casting director with past stage training and experience instead of relying on some of the nincompoops now in charge of the offices, who for the most part have had no previous theatrical experience other than that which they usually resurrect for biographies and for the most part a figment of the imagination.

\* \* \*

### Seek New Title

#### For Gates Story

Warner Bros. executives, Al Jolson and Harvey Gates the scenarist, are seeking a new title for "Sonny Boy," original story recently written by Gates. The story was intended as a starring vehicle for David Lee, three-year-old actor. Later it was decided to star Al Jolson in the vehicle and feature Davy.

\* \* \*

### Shumate Signed

#### By First National

Harold Shumate, who recently returned from New York, where he supervised the making of several talking features for Gotham, has been signed by First National to write a special story to serve as a vehicle for Milton Sills.

## TALMADGE FILM TO HAVE SOUND

Oscar A. Price announces that he has entered into an arrangement with Cortland H. Smith, General Manager of the Fox Case Corporation, by which that organization will synchronize "The Bachelors' Club," starring Richard Talmadge and featuring Barbara Worth and Edna Murphy, with sound, music, and effects on the Movietone process by Erno Rapee and his Roxy Theatre orchestra. A special theme song for "The Bachelors' Club" has been written by Erno Rapee who is also composer of "Charmaine," "Diane" and "Angela Mia."

\* \* \*

### Sound Co. In Italy

Naples. — Renewed production activity has begun in the Italian motion picture industry, with a new company being reported as forming for the purpose of making talking pictures. Several silent productions are in the course of production or are being prepared.

At the large Cines studio in Rome, a picture is being made with the catacombs as the principal setting, by Cittaluga Films of Berlin, and the Societe of Great Films, operating jointly. This production will be followed immediately it is said, by "Daughter of a King," which will be made in Rome and Egypt.

Cittaluga, has also reached an agreement with Fert and Itala for a production which is now being prepared.

\* \* \*

### Viola Dana To Be

#### Starred By King

Viola Dana is to be starred in "One Splendid Hour" which Burton King will produce and personally direct. It is an original underworld story by Adelaide Leitbach.

This picture marks Miss Dana's return to the screen after an extensive vaudeville tour throughout the east. It is scheduled to go into production the first of next week.

## PAT O'MALLEY IN TALKIES

Pat O'Malley was among one of the first screen actors to use the United Artists sound stages when he played the title role of detective Tommy Glennon in the talkie version of the stage play "Nightstick," which will be released as "Alibi."

The company, including several stage favorites who never before did any screen work, have just completed the final scenes of this United Artists first all-dialogue picture. Pat O'Malley and Eleanor Griffith, direct from the New York stage, are co-featured.

\* \* \*

## FIRST NAT'L SIGNS FRED KOHLER

Fred Kohler, who has been a busy free-lancer since leaving Paramount's fold, has just been signed by First National for an important role in Mervyn LeRoy's next directorial effort "Broadway Babies" starring Alice White. The story is taken from "The Three Musketeers" which recently ran in one of the national magazines. Kohler will play the role of Rand, a Broadway racketeer. The picture is scheduled to go into production February 8.

Kohler recently completed a featured role in "The Quitter" with Ben Lyon and Dorothy Revier for Columbia.

\* \* \*

## ARTHUR RANKIN HEARD

Arthur Rankin, young juvenile player, is heard for the first time by film audiences in "The Wolf of Wall Street" now playing at the Paramount Theatre. He is seen in a featured role opposite Nancy Carroll in this unusual drama. This is the first talking picture to be released out of four that Rankin has completed. The others are "Alimony Anny" and "One Glorious Night" for Warners, and "Brothers."

## OLIVE HASBROUCK FINISHES

Olive Hasbrouck has just finished her latest role opposite Ken Maynard in "The Royal Rider," which Harry Brown directed for First National. The film is now being edited for future release.

\* \* \*

## BODIL ROSING FINISHES

Bodil Rosing, whose ability to completely submerge herself into a characterization won for her many of the most coveted character roles during the past year, has just finished her latest role of Gary Cooper's mother in "Betrayal" for Paramount.

\* \* \*

## ERNEST HILLIARD AT WARNERS

Ernest Hilliard has just been signed by Warner Bros. for the role of defense attorney in "The Gamblers," which Michael Curtiz is directing. Hilliard has a successful role for he wins his case against strong opposition from the prosecuting attorney, played by H. B. Warner, who having just completed being district attorney in "The Trial of Mary Dugan" for M-G-M, is again seen as prosecuting attorney in "The Gamblers." Hilliard will defend Jason Robards, who plays the boy that is implicated with some stolen bonds.

\* \* \*

## RALPH GRAVES IN BIG ROLE

Ralph Graves cuts another notch in his comeback gun by his outstanding performance in "The Flying Fleet" for M-G-M now playing at Loew's State Theatre. Graves received considerable praise for his splendid characterization in "Submarine," now showing locally.

\* \* \*

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# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

**"STRONG BOY,"** a William Fox production.

Directed by John Ford.

Scenario by James McGinnis and Andrew Benison.

Cast: Victor McLaglen, Leatrice Joy, Clyde Cook, Slim Summerville and J. Farrell McDonald.

A Preview.

## Critical Viewpoint:

Fox will never get anywhere with Victor McLaglen presenting him in this sort of material. The story is trite and there are no situations provided to bring out the best in this star. While the producers evidently intended the role of the "baggage smasher" to be something of a character for McLaglen, the star turns in a very colorless portrayal and for the most part merely walks through the picture. He has no opportunity to do anything but neither does he attempt to make the best of a bad bargain. In several episodes McLaglen allowed Clyde Cook and Slim Summerville, playing comedy relief, to steal all honors away from him.

Why waste McLaglen on such uninspired stuff. He doesn't seem at home in this kind of light comedy material; he loses both power and personality.

There are two or three humorous gags in the picture which bring in a few laughs, they are unimportant and the comedy is not sustained over sufficient footage to make the picture good entertainment.

John Ford's direction is perhaps satisfactory considering what he had to work with, but such pictures are quite a comedown for a director who was formerly a king-pin on the Fox lot. Apparently Ford must have lost a great deal of prestige in Fox production circles, otherwise they would never have given him such a commonplace assignment as "Strong Boy."

Leatrice Joy's presence in the film is somewhat at a loss due to the fact that she was never given the chance to do anything.

## Box Office Angle:

"Strong Boy" is a second rate program offering carrying

very slight audience appeal. It is not the sort of stuff in which the public expects to see McLaglen and his admirers will be disappointed. Would advise exhibitors to go easy on this one and promise nothing.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

## French Police in Film

Paris.—Jean Lorette is directing a picture for the police department. The picture will be designed to educate the Parisian public to safe and sane pedestrianism and driving in traffic.

\* \* \*

## Only Two Talkers

### Cut by Providence

Providence.—Only two talkers shown in Providence during the past year were changed by the city censor, annual report of Police Capt. Geo. W. Cowan, amusement inspector shows.

\* \* \*

## British Firm Making

### Sound Pictures

London—Supreme Film Co., it is reported, is now producing sound versions of their "The Clown," directed by George Jacoby, with Victor Janson and "Saxophone Susie," featuring Malcolm Tod and Anny Ondra.

\* \* \*

## "In Old Arizona"

### Breaks Record at Roxy

With a gross of \$54,000 for Saturday and Sunday, "In Old Arizona," the first complete talker from Fox established a new high record for week ends at the Roxy. The picture is expected to play this big New York theatre for three weeks.

Frederick Zelnick, prominent German director has arrived in the United States from Berlin, as well as Kurt Hubert, director of UFA, in charge of Foreign Affairs and Directors Grieving and Grau, also of UFA.

**"THE SPITE MARRIAGE,"** an M-G-M production.

Featuring Buster Keaton.

Directed by Edward Sedgwick.

Story by Lew Lipton.

Scenario by Richard Schayer.

Cast: Dorothy Sebastian, Edward Earle, Leila Hyams, William Bechtel and John Byron.

A Preview.

## Critical Viewpoint:

Keaton's latest opus is more or less of a pot-pourri of slapstick without much rhyme or reason. There is little of any continuity or logical development to the story, with the exception of a skeleton outline upon which to string the series of gags and comedy instances.

Despite this lack of plot, "The Spite Marriage" has several moments which are extremely amusing and entitle it to be rated as somewhat above the average feature length comedy. Keaton has been supplied with a quaint character role which enables him to let loose a lot of drollery which at times reaches hilarious proportions.

Keaton in fact, is more the comedian than he has ever been before in his career. He has dropped some of his stiffness—including the frozen face formula which has constantly kept him from getting out of the ranks of second rate comedians. He is more human and is not only better in his moments of fun but he is successful in getting across nice bits of pathos.

The opening episodes in "The Spite Marriage" are a riot. Consisting of a series of clever antics on the part of Keaton who gets mixed up with a show troupe. The first reel or two, one long stretch of laughter and if the remainder of the picture had been able to keep up to this early pace, it would have been a wow, there is also a screamingly funny episode between Keaton and Dorothy Sebastian wherein the comedian tries to put the actress to bed after she has imbibed too freely in hard liquor.

The story then takes a different twist and the balance of the action occurs on a boat at sea. There is some fair stuff

here, one or two comedy situations getting good laugh results but generally speaking the last half of the picture is ordinary.

## Box Office Angle:

"The Spite Marriage" is not up to the mark of some of Keaton's satires but the comedian himself is far better than he has ever been and the picture as a whole will get the laughs and send customers home happy.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

## Propose Canadian Studio

London.—Richard Maitland Edwards, who has been studying the possibilities of erecting a studio at Vancouver, is expected to arrive here to secure additional financial capital. In a recent letter to his father he stated that a Canadian financial company was interested to the extent of \$125,000.

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# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

**"WEARY RIVER,"** a First National production.

Directed by Frank Lloyd.

Screen story and dialogue by Bradley King.

Starring Richard Barthelmess; featuring Betty Compson, William Holden and Arthur Stone.

## Critical Viewpoint:

"Weary River" is sure-fire box-office. Audiences will eat it up. I am glad I did not read the story as those who did claim that the gangster's character should not have been changed. To me "Weary River" is a darn good picture. It shows prison life without being propaganda and boring the viewers. The characters are well worked out and they are human—the warden being a new type to the screen and decidedly refreshing. Frank Lloyd's direction has its old time punch. There are many fine touches in this film.

Bradley King's dialogue is excellent—it is in keeping with the characters, is humorous and dramatic in turn, adding much to the picture. Miss King also wrote the screen story—a difficult but creditable task.

The effect of environment and jails on human beings has been adroitly handled. While the hardships of prison life is shown, it does not leave the bitter effect of plays like "Justice." The wardens talk to the released convicts and his explanation to Barthelmess that much depends on the individual takes the sting off the cruelty of jails. Yet the ironic fact that the ex-convicts are told they are given a start in life by the government, by being given the munificent sum of five dollars, is stark reality. The treatment of various persons to Barthelmess because he has been a prisoner shows the way of an "ex" is hard. Instead of being entertaining this film might easily have become sloppily sentimental or just propaganda.

Much interest will be aroused in this cinema as it is the first talking picture with Richard Barthelmess. Richard Barthelmess is a great actor with a remarkable personality. His

speaking voice registers very much like Conrad Nagel's. It has been said that the singing is done by a double. If so, the synchronization is done so skillfully that someone is deserving of much credit. And if the boy who sings does not look like Bull Montana he should be a good bet as his voice has warmth and is very pleasing. No matter who sings, Richard Barthelmess will go over big in this production.

Betty Compson looks lovely, and gives a splendid performance. William Holden as the warden will reap much from his work. He has the gift of making the observer forget he is watching an actor. Holden has sincerity and a voice without a metallic quality. The rest of the cast is good.

## Box Office Angle:

"Weary River" is being road-shown in New York. How this picture will go over at two-dollars is problematical as in the past year almost none have stood up at this price. Otherwise this production should coin money for exhibitors. It is certain that ninety-five percent of the fans will be enthusiastic over it.—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

## Synchronizing

### "Moulin Rouge"

The first World Wide release with sound accompaniment will be "Moulin Rouge," directed by E. A. Dupont and introducing the Continental screen star Olga Chekova. R. C. A.-Photophone is synchronizing the production under the direction of Joseph Littau, of "Roxy's" with the Photophone Symphony orchestra.

\* \* \*

## Fox Signs Silvernail

Clark Silvernail, Broadway actor, producer, director and playwright, has been placed under contract by Fox to write and direct Movietone features.

**"THE REDEEMING SIN,"** a Warner Bros. picture.

Starring Dolores Costello.

Directed by Howard Bretherton.

Scenario by Robert Lord.

Dialogue by Joseph Jackson.

Cast: Conrad Nagel, Georgie Stone, Warner Richmond, Lionel Belmore, Nina Quartero and Phillippe De Lacy.

## Critical Viewpoint:

Apparently this film was not originally intended as a talking subject. At least, that is the impression one gains, because the plot and situations do not seem to be constructed with dialogue in view.

Even as it stands "The Redeeming Sin" is not an all-talker, dialogues being used in only three or four different spots. In this particular instance the dialogues detract from rather than enhance the picture as a whole because they only occur for brief spells and then the picture becomes silent again. This causes an intermittent change in tempo which becomes annoying and causes a loss of spectator interest, especially in view of the fact that some of the best situations are silent when the audience expects them to be treated in dialogue.

As a straight silent picture "The Redeeming Sin" should be far more effective. While there is nothing startlingly new about the story, it is laid against a colorful background and contains sufficient drama to create audience suspense, providing the situations were edited with a view to their real values, rather than with the idea of stretching them out for purposes of dialogue. The picture is now draggy in many places, because of situations being played for far more footage than they merit.

The film has been splendidly staged and is well mounted with impressive settings and excellent photography. Howard Bretherton has done commendable work with the direction of the piece, and is not to be held responsible for the defects in the production, which are primarily due to attempt to mix silent and sound in a vehicle

which is not suited to such a combination.

Dolores Costello scores a favorable impression histrionically but due to an unbecoming headdress her beauty suffers. Conrad Nagel has merely a straight role and is more or less his usual self. Georgie Stone is good in his supporting role.

## Box Office Angle:

As a talkie this is only so-so. As a silent picture, after some re-editing, "The Redeeming Sin" should make a good program offering.—TAMAR LANE.

\* \* \*

## Madison Writing

### For Will Mahoney

While playing at the Los Angeles Orpheum, Will Mahoney ordered some comedy material from James Madison. The result was so satisfactory that an arrangement has been entered into by which Madison will continue to supply him with his comedy routines throughout the current year.

\* \* \*

## Completes Sono-Art Script

Frances Agnew, freelance scenario, title and dialogue writer, who returned from New York recently with the Sono-Art Productions Co., has completed the script of their first all-talking feature, tentatively titled "Broadway Bound" starring Eddie Dowling, Broadway musical comedy star. O. E. Goebel, president and Geo. W. Weeks, vice-president, are sponsoring this new sound productions company, using the Metropolitan Studio Sound stages.

\* \* \*

## Pathe Signs Jimmy Aldine

Jimmy Aldine has been placed under a long term contract by Pathe.

# FRED NEWMAYER

## Directing

Sono-Art's Special

ALL TALKING

Production

Starring

EDDIE DOWLING



**10c**

*News, Reviews,  
Opinions*

*Published Every  
Friday*

**10c**

# THE FILM MERCURY

*VERITAS VINCIT*



Vol. 9, No. 12  
Sixteen Pages

HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA  
THE FILM MERCURY, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1929

*Edited by*  
**TAMAR LANE**

## Shake-Up Under Way On Fox Lot

## Gov't Starts Alien Round-Up

## Rothacker New Pathe Studio Head, Report

## Upheaval In United Artists ?

## Film Stars Dumb, Says Ziegfeld

## The Movies And Crime

## The Race For Personal Glory

### REVIEWS

**"The Bridge of San Louis Rey"**

**"Captain Lash"**

**"The Lady Of Chance"**

**"The Divine Lady"**

## Rothacker Pathe Studio Head, Report

None other than Watterson Rothacker, former production head at First National, may take over the reins at the Pathe studio, according to advices which reached The Film Mercury this week.

Rothacker has been inactive in production circles since resigning from the F. N. post.

Nothing official has been announced as yet, but with the arrival of Joseph Kennedy in Hollywood this week it is believed that several announcements of importance will be made relative to Pathe. Kennedy has recently issued denials regarding various mergers in which the name of Pathe has been included, although it is generally predicted that Pathe will line up with RKO or one of the other big concerns within the next few weeks.

## Joe E. Brown Getting Break in Movies

Joe E. Brown, noted stage comedian, recruited from Broadway, appears to be getting a big break in the movie racket. Since scoring his impressive hit in "Hit of the Show" Brown has been in big demand at local studios.

F. B. O. featured him in two additional productions, then he was engaged for two pictures by Tiffany-Stahl. Scoring heavily in these Brown was recently signed to be starred in three T-S features at a fifty per cent increase in salary. In addition, Warner Bros. signed him last week at an increased salary for a Vitaphone special. Brown is also slated to appear in a big United Artists release.

\* \* \*

## Snell Vacationing

Earle Snell is taking a brief vacation after completing the continuity of his latest original story, "Companionate Troubles" for Universal.

# Immigration Officials Start Alien Round-up

U. S. Immigration authorities have started a drive to round up alien visitors who have overstayed their time limit. During the past week several European actors were taken in charge by Immigration officials and will be deported.

This action is certain to have wide-spread effects in the Hollywood film colony, which contains a large number of foreign film workers who did not come into the country via the quota, but are visitors.

It is understood that many of the foremost foreign stars and directors will be hailed before the authorities within the next few days and ordered to leave the country. Some may be allowed an extension of time but most of them will be forced to return to Europe.

Their only recourse then will be to make another re-entry into America as a short term visitor,

or to remain in their own country and come in with the quota, which might mean a lengthy wait.

The government has been lax in enforcing its immigration rules in connection with foreign screen workers because of the fact that most of them earn large salaries and there is no danger of their becoming public charges. Why the immigration authorities have suddenly started upon a drive is surrounded in mystery.

\* \* \*

## Bodil Rosing In

### F. N. Talk Film

Bodil Rosing has been signed for a featured role in Alice White's new picture "Broadway Babies," which Mervyn LeRoy is directing for First National. This picture will be Bodil's first experience in a dialogue film.

In Preparation:  
"REDEMPTION"

# HOWARD J. GREEN

WROTE

Screen Version and Dialogue

— Columbia's All-Talkie —

# "THE DONOVAN AFFAIR"

Directed by FRANK CAPRA

FREE-LANCING

Management EDWARD SMALL COMPANY



**ANABEL LANE***Says*

While I believe the too infrequent screen appearances of stars aid in killing public interest in those stars, on the other hand there are certain actors and actresses who should not be seen too often. The few pictures a year in which Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin, Janet Gaynor, etc., appear, are not enough to stimulate public acquaintance and affection. It is true that intimacy breeds a knowledge of shortcomings, but only seeing a player occasionally is not sufficient to create a feeling of warmth.

The protagonist of this comment is Emil Jannings. In the Film Mercury of April 20, '28, the belief was expressed that "the danger that threatens Mr. Jannings is overpresentation. This actor should at the most be in three productions a year. Any organization which holds a film in which he has appeared has released it to the exhibitors on the strength of Jannings' name. Even now some are claiming that Jannings is not a great actor, that he is the same in every picture. Too many pictures will kill him altogether."

Within a year Emil Jannings has been released in "The Last Command," "Street of Sin," "The Patriot," "Sins of the Fathers." If all of these cinemas were outstanding, Herr Jannings might have profited, but it has never been the lot of any star to have a series of first-rate productions. Unless the next few pictures of the German star are unusually good, it will not fare so well with Jannings. The fans expect an actor to top his last performance in each new picture. Emil Jannings, the same as anyone else has mannerisms. Due to the belief he is the finest actor on the silversheet, he is expected to be different in each picture—this is an impossibility. Hence too many films are injurious to his prestige and personality.

**UPHEAVAL IN UNITED ARTISTS RANKS?**

Many changes are expected to occur in the ranks of the United Artists organization during the next few weeks. A shake-up of important proportions has already been felt in the New York offices of the company, several executives having been dropped from the payroll, and is rumored that this upheaval will soon be felt in all branches of the organization.

Joseph M. Schenck, according to reports published in the Exhibitors Daily Review, is dissatisfied with the way United Artists affairs have been running and is contemplating many radical shifts in policies and personnel. Schenck, however, has issued a denial of all these rumors.

According to reports published in New York, the first consideration will be for the production and release of more pictures as an organization having exchanges in every center with an overhead that is tremendous, the present amount of releases will never carry it. Instead of 10 or 15 pictures a year, as has been the case in the past, United Artists Corp., will plan to release at least 30 pictures during 1929-30.

The next step will be a complete unification of all production forces. Heretofore every member of United Artists has worked on an individual basis, and this has proven entirely too expensive. Schenck's idea, we are told, will cause all these individual units to be financed, produced and released, as are the releases of every other large producing and releasing organization now in existence. Fairbanks, Pickford, Swanson, Talmadge, Del Rio, Banky, Colman, Inspiration, Caddo and Art Cinema, now under contract to release through this organization will get their finances from a central source and one organization will take care of the production and release of the product. As conditions are at the present time, with every unit having its own production organization, its individual sales head, advertising and publicity forces, the matter of concen-

trated effort is lost. There has been too little harmony in every department one fellow always stepping on the toes of the other, with always a squawk about the sales price of this or that picture in one or more localities. The result being that the grosses have not been what they should have been and the overhead has been terrific. Consequently, comparatively little money for the producer member and his financial aids.

It is thought with this complete unification that a lower cost will be reached without lessening the box office or production values. Schenck, it is said, is of the belief that the members of United Artists are spending entirely too much money on their product.

\* \* \*

**Signed by Warners**

Gladys Brockwell has been signed by Warner Bros. to play a prominent role in "The Argyle Case," with Thomas Meighan.

**Film Stars Dumb Says Ziegfeld**

Commenting upon his entry into the talking film racket, Flo Ziegfeld has the following to say:

"There is nothing the matter with the talkies. They are mechanically perfect. The trouble is with the dumb stars who are making them. Someone has got to teach Hollywood how to use the instrument. I don't believe there is anybody out there who knows anything about it. There are others besides Al Jolson, but you have to get them from the stage," he explained, and predicted a short end for many of the movie stars high on the payrolls at Hollywood. The instrument, he contended, shows up how little they are worth.

"And it is a good thing. There are going to be many changes, and the stars, whether of the stage or screen, are going to mean far less. It has been definitely proved that a good show makes a star, and without one he hasn't a chance."

**Paul  
Perez**

..... Now titling  
**Ferenc Molnar's**  
**PRISONERS,**  
directed by Wm.  
**A. Seiter,** and  
starring .....

**Corinne  
Griffith**

Exclusive  
Representatives

Lichtig  
& Englander

sig schlager

has the privilege of announcing that

John Griffith Wray

will direct

"Diversion"

First National-Vitaphone Special

—:—:—:—

Casey Robinson

will direct

"Listen, Baby"

Pathe-Photophone Production

—:—:—:—

Alan Hale

will star in three Pathe Productions  
with Photophone for 1929

—:—:—:—

Notable Campaigns: National Exploitation "Companionate Marriage"; "White Gold," "Gigolo," "Thundering Herd" for William K. Howard; Irving Cummings' "Dressed to Kill" (William M. Conselman Production); Alan Hale in "The Spieler"; "Skyscraper," etc., etc.

## Many Flops Saved by Editing

Like most platitudes, the one about "pictures being made in the cutting-room" is only too true. There may be considerable doubt as to what the story-writer, scenario writer, director and supervisor of the picture have *tried* to do or *intended* to do with that particular picture. But the cutter's work and the title-writer's work are referred directly to the audience for judgment. In the face of an audience, *attempts* and *intentions* have no significance. The final product—moulded by the cutter and title-writer—is assured of a swift, emphatic and merciless judgment the first time the picture is previewed.

Scientific editing is the most important and the latest phase of motion-picture production to be developed. Heretofore, vast sums of money were spent on the story, the scenario and the actual camera work—only to produce a wretched failure because the final product, the ultimate result of so much effort and expense, was butchered by inept cutting and idiotic titles. To save a thousand dollars in the difference between the salary of a hack and the salary of a competent film-editor, a two hundred thousand dollar picture has often been put in jeopardy.

A good cutter is not a mere mechanic but an intelligent craftsman with a highly developed sense of tempo, rhythm, emotional and dramatic orchestration. A good title writer is not merely a writer with an elementary knowledge of grammar and punctuation! A competent editorial team can materially enhance the value of a good picture and, if necessary, work potent magic in saving a poor one.

Let us conclude with a solemn adjuration to the gentlemen who have money invested in motion picture production: "As insurance of a fair return on

your investment, skimp a bit, if you must, on the sets and costumes—but not on your film-editor and title-writer!"

—TAMAR LANE.

\* \* \*

## Praise Pommer's Latest Ufa Film

London.—It is claimed for "Hungarian Rhapsody," Erich Pommer's latest production for Ufa, that it is the first silent sound-film—by which is indicated that, whilst not produced as a "talkie" it has been produced to follow certain musical laws to blend picture and orchestral accompaniment.

In other words, each scene was "shot" and every sequence cut to the rhythm of the music that accompanies it.

For instance, in the reaping scenes, the peasants' cycles swing to the tempo of the simple, lilting Hungarian harvesting song, and although close-ups of Willy Fritsch and Dita Parlo are interjected, the picture always comes back to the harvesters singing, in perfect rhythm.

The whole film has been produced to fully exploit an accompaniment of characteristic Hungarian music—not spasmodically but continuously throughout the film.

There are scenes of an officers' "carousal," and of a harvest thanksgiving folk dance, where the tempo of the film actually grows faster and faster in rhythm with the characteristic increasing tempo of the *tzigane* music.

The first performance of "Hungarian Rhapsody" is likely, therefore, to prove a musical as well as a film treat.

Notwithstanding its possibilities for musical presentation, however, Pommer's latest is quite able to stand the entertainment test

ROBERT LORD

Under Contract to Warner Brothers



"The Spieler"—Pathe—Talk and Sound. Clicks strong with colorful story. . . filled with action. . . Here is a dandy number . . . the story was done by one who knows. . . Tay Garnett did a showman's job. . .

DIRECTION: Tay Garnett, excellent; AUTHOR: Hal Conklin; SCENARIO: Tay Garnett and Hal Conklin.

—*"Film Daily"*

"The Spieler" (PT) with Alan Hale and Renee Adoree. **HORRIBLE!** One man's neck is broken . . . hero breaks the neck of the villian.

Hal Conklin wrote the story. Tay Garnett directed the picture. There are some talking sequences. The music synchronization is good.

—*"Harrison's Reports"*

PHOTOPLAY listed "The Spieler" as one of the SIX BEST of the month.

Here is carnival life "as is"—keep your eye on Tay Garnett.

—*"Photoplay"*

Tay Garnett's directorial ability is well defined in "The Spieler." There certainly must be a premium in the business of directing pictures, if so Tay Garnett is my candidate.

—*"World-Herald"*—Hodges

Pathe's rooster can lift it's head high and crow over "The Spieler."

—*"Motion Picture News"*—Jerry Hoffman

Listed by TAMAR LANE as one of the best pictures OF THE YEAR.

"The Spieler"—Here is an unusually entertaining picture, made doubly enjoyable by virtue of good scenario work, clever direction, and capable acting. Tay Garnett's direction is outstanding.

—*"Film Mercury"*—Tamar Lane

# THE FILM PARADE

*As seen by* **RICHARD WATTS JR.**

Photoplay Editor, *New York Herald-Tribune*

With the arrival of each new talking picture, the evidence increases that screen dialogue means the destruction of all the cinema has accomplished during many laborious years, towards developing into a distinctive, independent and major art form. I do not say that effective dramatic efforts are impossible to the new medium. It is merely my contention that the triumph of the audible photoplay means the scrapping of the motion picture as we know it, with its enormous pictorial sweep and emotional appeal, its position as a free and individual form of the drama. It means that the cinema will dutifully take up the humble position of a mechanical servitor, a sort of modest robot, of the traditional stage. It means a complete surrender of aesthetic independence.

It is, I know, the claim of its defenders that the new form will eventually result in a sort of Frank Munsey amalgamation of stage and screen, combining, as that energetic gentleman used to say, the best features of each. So far, however, the indications are—and each new picture increases them—that the result will be a submergence of the technique and the aesthetic ideals of the cinema and the dominance of the manner, the methods, the stories and the actors of the conventional theatre. The ideal motion picture of the new dispensation will not be one possessing visual power, dynamic effects, the poetry and drama of sweeping, pictorial movement, combined with significant dialogue and sound effects. Rather will it be, I suspect, the photographed stage play, with a handful of actors, a few sets, lethargic motion and literary talk.

Of course, all of this is sheer guess work, based on what aesthetic principles of theatre and photoplay happen to be lying

around, and on an effort to predict the future through a consideration of the pictures in the new manner that have so far been vouchsafed us. Apologetic defenders of the talking picture will tell you, of course, that the current examples of the new form are but the first hesitating attempts to handle a novel and mighty invention, and they will point out the status of the first railroad train, the first airplane and the first motion picture. It was, however, possible to figure out something about the destiny of these scientific achievements from even the earliest examples, and so I don't see why you can't be fairly accurate in predicting the future of the talking screen.

That the producers are definitely trying to get away from the stage limitations imposed on their medium is true, upon occasion, but I have seen little to suggest that they will be successful in their attempt. The most ambitious effort for independence is "In Old Arizona," with its use of many exteriors for its action. But even though the melodrama did get out into the open air with gratifying persistence, the drama was entirely carried on by stage methods.

Though real Arizona mountains were used for backdrops, rather than painted canvas; though you heard cows in action, rather than the offstage noises made by the stage hands, the plot was brought to its climax and conclusion in the same manner the theatre would have used. Even the attempt to add pictorial movement by shifting from scene to scene, from character to character, from close-up to long shot, could not conceal the fact that here was a conventional stage play, constructed according to routine principles of the drama and acted in the same manner. The chief difference, next to the obvious two-dimensional quality that synchronized speech some-

how emphasizes, was that the action was slower than the stage would have permitted.

Mr. Barthelmess' first talking film is the closest thing to a successful combination of movement and camera effectiveness with stage dialogue I have yet witnessed. It had the misfortune, however, to belong to that curious form of drama that is neither all-talk nor all-silent and, though its shifting from one manner to the other caused less than the usual annoyance, it did show, for all its smoothness, how different are the two methods and how closely the speaking portions are dependent on the stage for their technique. It was, in fact, Mr. Barthelmess' triumph that he showed himself a competent actor in his motion picture.

"The Bellamy Trial" and "On Trial" are obviously in the conventional stage tradition of the popular courtroom melodramas. "The Wolf of Wall Street" is merely the photograph, scene by scene and speech by speech, of a stock market drama of the Charles Klein era. "Interference" and "The Doctor's Secret" are frankly direct talking photographs of stage plays.

It is in great part due to its frankness in adapting stage technique that "The Doctor's Secret" proves to be so successful as entertainment. Obviously the producers had no nonsense in mind about camera angles and visual flow and crescendo and diminuendo and the other technical terms of the old-school cinema philosophers. They confined their efforts to "a series of vocalized close-ups photographed on a few sets," as Miss Betty Colfax, screen critic of "The Evening Graphic" succinctly put it. A camera and a microphone caught a stage play scene by scene and the result is, logically enough, a talking photoplay. Since the original drama hap-

pened to be artificially effective, it naturally resulted in good material for so artificial a medium.

As you probably know, "The Doctor's Secret" is based on the one act Barrie play called "Half an Hour." Its success as a dialogue picture would seem to indicate that brief, rather than full length, dramas provide the proper material for the new medium. The stage technique of "Interference" was as faithful and the latter play is almost as trickily effective as the Barrie work, yet "The Doctor's Secret" is a far more entertaining photoplay. The reason seems to be that the regulation three act play contains too much dialogue for a motion picture and that cutting it to the required length is likely to result in destruction for its characterizations, its background and its exposition. The short play, however, is just about the right size for the ponderous, slow paced infant art. A play supposed to take place in half an hour took sixty five minutes to pass a given screen. That is about the correct ratio for the garrulous cinema.

\* \* \*

## Del Rio Wants "Congai"

Dolores Del Rio is said to be angling for the film rights to "Congai," the Helen Mencken play now running in N. Y.

\* \* \*

## New Play By

**George Scarborough**

"Bad Babies" is the title of a new stage play by George Scarborough, which will be presented in Los Angeles shortly.

\* \* \*

## Breese In It

Edmund Breese is playing a role in the Warner Bros. Vitaphone subject, "Headlines."

\* \* \*

## Writes Stage Play

James Kirkwood has just written a stage play entitled, "Soul and Body," to be produced this season.



# TOM REED

*Universal's Mystery Drama*

## **"LAST WARNING"**

(Titles and Dialogue)

COLLEEN MOORE

*First National*

## **"SYNTHETIC SIN"**

(Titles)

*Universal's Dramatic Character Study*

## **"ERIK THE GREAT"**

(Titles)

*The One and Only*

## **"BROADWAY"**

(Titles)

*Carl Laemmle's Tremendous*

## **"SHOW BOAT"**

(Titles and Dialogue)

Vol. 9, No. 12  
Published 1929 by  
Mercury Publishing Co.

# THE FILM MERCURY

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Subscription Rates: \$3 for 52 issues; \$2 for 26 issues anywhere in the United States and its Possessions. 25% surcharge on Canadian subscription. 50% surcharge on Foreign subscriptions.

Mercury Publishing Company will not be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, letters or photographs and all such material is received at the sender's risk.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1929

## The Movies And Crime

"Whereas one of the greatest causes of crime is the unregulated motion picture screen—"

Stop right there!

The above quotation is from Section 28 of a resolution passed by the California Synod of the Presbyterian Church in convention at Hollywood last week.

"Whereas" is the first word used when one is begging the question. The best definition for this popular form of evasion is—"Begging the question is to assume the point that must be proven, the California Synod of the Presbyterian Church has done so here.

The resolution goes on to recommend censorship of the movies because "the movies are one of the greatest causes of crime."

The movies are NOT the cause of crime—but if they were, Censorship wouldn't prevent the human hatreds, animosities and greeds that really are the cause of criminal acts.

Everybody knows that the strictest censorship of this country is practiced in Pennsylvania, and particularly in Philadelphia. Yet there were many more murders in the City of Brotherly Love last year than there were during the same period in the entire Dominion of Canada! "Whereas one of the greatest causes of crime is the unregulated motion picture screen—"

The state of Illinois has no censor, but Chicago has one of the most notorious and industrious custodians of public morals in Major Funkhouser, the movie censor of that city. No citizen of the Windy Burg ever sees anything but the most virgin pure of cinematic entertainment, yet wholesale murder merchants cruise the streets of Chicago in armoured cars that belch death from machine guns. "Whereas one of the greatest causes of crime—" etc.

Censorship of motion pictures will never cure social or intellectual evils any more than censorship has ever cured anything.

If the movies could be blamed for crime, newspapers with their extended reports and minute details and billboard publicity concerning every actual or attempted transgression would be a thousand times more culpable.

But the basis of crime lies deeper than mere external influence or environment.

The criminal displays an inherent weakness of character with which he was born. It has been thus throughout the history of mankind. Pictures have nothing to do with it.

One might as well blame the movies for smallpox, scarlet fever and pneumonia.

The trouble with preachers who advocate censorship is that they don't go to the movies enough to find out the truth, or they are so dumb that they cannot see it.

For the benefit of both these classes, let us point out that the Bible is considered by many of them as an inspired volume—that is, what was left of it after the censors of the Dark Ages got through with it. We have heard many holy men quote the Good Book on such matters as murder, rape, suicide, fratricide, patricide, matricide, stealing, desiring thy neighbor's wife, and many crimes too revolting to print in a paper that circulates among people of taste.

The object in quoting such unpleasantness from the pulpit is

### Buy Musical Hit

"Hit the Deck," sensational musical comedy hit, will be the third "all-dialogue-and-music" extravaganza on this year's Radio Pictures program.

\* \* \*

### Tech Stock Increase

The Technicolor Inc., are increasing their capital stock from 500,000 to 600,000 shares of common.

### Warners Take Over House in Philadelphia

Philadelphia. — Warners has purchased the Boyd here, new house recently opened by Al Boyd, as the first of a chain planned throughout this territory.

\* \* \*

### Signs with Fox

Rod LaRocque has been engaged for a picture by Fox.

undoubtedly for the purpose of instructing the young and impressionable in what to avoid, for such allusions are invariably followed by dire consequence and discomforts.

This is also true of the Movies, in which virtue always triumphs and evil always suffers. The censors are not responsible for this condition—the Public demands it.

The truth that our Spiritual pilots miss is that the movies are really helping them in their good work and should be encouraged.

The clergy should therefore be opposed to any censorship of pictures. We suggest that the California Synod of the Presbyterian Church look a little deeper before leaping to conclusions that begin—"Whereas—"

—S.K.B.

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City.....



## Fox Making Changes in Studio Force

In line with the reorganization plans now being put into effect at several of the big studios comes the report that the Fox production forces are also about to undergo a number of changes. Two prominent members of the studio staff have already been dropped and it is understood that several others now in office will be replaced in preparation for a new production drive.

The visit of William Fox to the Coast is reported as having had something to do with recent studio shifts and it is rumored that Fox is also contemplating more changes both in personnel and policies.

Fox is also said to be conferring on next season's product and ironing out the problem of how much talk and sound should go into the Fox program.

It has been reported about town that Fox intends to confine its talking activities to short subjects but this is considered as extremely unlikely in

view of the plans of other concerns to produce most of their features in sound.

\* \* \*

### Gates Signs New

#### Warner Contract

Harvey Gates has signed a new contract with Warner Bros., therefore starting on his third year with that organization. Some of Gates better known stories, many of which are originals, include, "The Terror," "The Desert Song," "Stark Mad," "Alimony Annie," "From Headquarters," "Sonny Boy" an Al Jolson starring vehicle. At present the writer is adapting to the screen "Hearts in Exile," for Dolores Costello.

\* \* \*

### Admission Tax

#### Proposed by Utah

Salt Lake City.—Admission tax on Utah theatres, proposed by Governor Dern, is being opposed by exhibitors of the state, many of whom will be forced to close if the measure is made a law.

## More Short Films Planned by M-G-M

Three one-act plays by Martin A. Flavin, writer of fiction and stage drama, have been purchased by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The new Flavin plays are "Brains," "Emergency" and "Casualties," all modern dramatic stories. The purchase indicates that the policy of short dramatic talking subjects proved successful with audiences, according to officials at the studios.

\* \* \*

### McIntyre and Heath

#### Sign With Fox

That famous team, McIntyre and Heath have been signed to a contract by the Fox organization. They will do a series of six short reel subjects and then put their popular stage success "Hamtree" into an all-talkie.

\* \* \*

### Signed for Talkie

M-G-M has signed the Duncan sisters for a special sound picture.

## Film Exports In New Decline

Washington. — Film exports from the United States during the month of November totaled 28,147,715 linear feet valued at \$771,060, against 30,438,408 feet valued at \$796,510 in October, according to figures made public today by the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce. The month's exports included 19,989,097 feet of positive film valued at \$490,580, 7,437,583 feet of raw stock valued at \$144,294, and 721,035 feet of negatives valued at \$136,186. The most important markets for positive film during the month were Australia, Argentina, Brazil, the United Kingdom and Germany, each of which took more than 1,000,000 feet.

\* \* \*

### Art Supervisor

Max Ree, artist and designer, has been signed as art supervisor of Radio Pictures to be produced at the RKO Studios, it was announced today.

# "The Winged Horseman"

HOOT GIBSON'S

*Universal Jewel Production*

TITLES BY

HAROLD E. TARSHIS

*Management* LICHTIG & ENGLANDER

## Claims "Dancing Daughters" Will Harm American Prestige

The American film industry will be rather surprised at some of the criticisms made in England against "Our Dancing Daughters," which has scored such a distinct hit on this side of the Atlantic. John MacCormack, London correspondent of the New York Times draws the following picture of the British reaction to the M-G-M picture, which will interest but not convince most American critics.

"London.—It has been estimated, I understand, that American films sell at least \$250,000,000 worth of American merchandise in a year. As a vehicle for cultural propaganda they are thought to be an even greater asset to the country which makes them. Every American film sent abroad, therefore, is not only a sort of animated catalogued of American goods, but an ambassador.

"Somebody once said that an ambassador was a man sent abroad to lie for his country. It is a subject for discussion in Great Britain from time to time whether American films paint a true picture of America. This question is sometimes asked because the conservative, not to say insular, Briton doubts whether life in the United States is as lovely as the screen represents it. More often it is because he does not believe American civilization has reached so low an ebb as some American films would have him believe. This is a compliment to America if not to American films.

"A picture now showing in London is 'Our Dancing Daughters.' It has been such a box office success that its run has been extended. What sort of impression does it give British audiences of the rising generation in America? It has been testified by Indians themselves that American films do no harm in India because the Hindu accepts Western customs as too fantastic and utterly remote to draw any conclusion from the representation of their more hectic aspects. But this is not India. Of the three girls in 'Our Dancing Daughters,' the

one who has nothing to reproach herself with but a love of life and a hatred for dissimulation is represented as shedding her skirt because it impeded her terpsichorean performance on top of a table in a crowded ballroom. Because the hero is taken somewhat aback by this unconventionality we are given to understand that he is a prig—at least that is the only moral we can draw from a film which represents him as being punished for the rest of his life—no, not for the rest of his life, because the girl he does marry conveniently falls down stairs in a drunken moment and breaks her neck.

"This is a country whose heroes would inevitably draw the same conclusion as the young American millionaire from the spectacle of a society girl doing a solo dance in her lingerie. Nobody would call them prigs for doing so. Britain's younger set may be no better than America's (as far as 'Our Dancing Daughters' is a criterion), but it is certainly more discreet.

"This picture cannot but do immense harm to American prestige,' remarks one British critic. 'If a picture such as 'Our Dancing Daughters' were produced in Britain we should say at once that an enemy had done this thing. If Hollywood film impresarios had a sense of national responsibility they would not produce such libels on America. In Russia they show films of this type without comment or alteration, because to do so saves money in the propaganda department.'

"This sort of criticism represents a shifting of the ground of complaint against American films. It used to be said they were too nationalistic to be suitable for international audiences and pictures such as 'The Big Parade' were resented because they seemed to ignore Britain's part in the war. During the past year or two, however, fewer complaints of this kind have been voiced and the reason seems to be that Hollywood has largely removed the ground of

## R-K-O Plans New \$30 Issue

Radio-Keith-Orpheum plans a new issue of about 290,000 shares of stock, offered to stockholders at \$30 a share. Owners of Class A and Class B will be entitled to subscribe for 1½ shares for each ten held. The stock now is being sold on a when-issued basis at around \$38 a share, making the rights worth about \$1.20 a share. The company has 3,500,000 shares of Class A authorized, of which 1,322,896 perviously were outstanding.

objection. In some recent pictures it has been evident that American history has been altered to avoid offending European susceptibilities. For instance, in 'Old Ironsides,' successfully shown here under the title 'Sons of the Sea,' America was represented as fighting Barbary pirates, whereas the story of 'Old Ironsides' was largely the story of Anglo-American conflict."

## Warner Bros. Show Net of \$2,917,724

Net of \$2,917,724 for the quarter ended Dec. 1, 1928, is reported by Warners, which is \$872,883 in excess of total profits for the full previous year.

The quarter's profits are equal to \$5.30 a share on the 550,000 shares of combined class A and common stocks outstanding Dec. 1. This compares with a net profit of \$102,687, or 18 cents a share, on the combined stock for the corresponding quarter of 1927 and with \$920,894 or \$1.67 a share, for the previous quarter ended Aug. 31, 1928.

\* \* \*

### In Mystery Film

Chester Conklin has been assigned to a comedy role in "The Studio Murder Mystery."

\* \* \*

### With Haines

Anita Page will play opposite William Haines in a film of naval life, now in production at M-G-M.

## Ben Jack

Now Starring in

SUPERIOR PRODUCTIONS

## "THE LITTLE BEGGAR"

Number One of Series of Twelve  
Two-Reel Dramas

Written and Directed  
By

Alphonse Martell



## The Race for Personal Glory

In almost every studio there is dissension prevalent among workers and employers, over credit for work done. Each individual in the business is out for glory, and some do not care whose feet they step on, nor how they get the glory so long as they get it.

Stars are jealous of their directors, directors jealous of supervisors, who they claim are taking all the credit, and so on down the line. The producers don't care one whit who gets the credit just as long as they get the money, and the public doesn't worry about any of them.

It is a race for personal glory, and this glory seeking oftentimes works havoc with the work to be done. The author believes his story letter perfect and should be produced as written. The director sees the scenarist's point of view through smoked glasses and changes the story to suit himself. The stars, thinking only of themselves, change the story also to suit their particular whims. The cameraman, a very important personage, but little glorified, offers a few suggestions only to be severely reprimanded for doing so.

When a picture is completed it is entirely different from the way it was written, and if good the author takes full credit. Then the director, the star, and last but not least the title writer, who can convince you he "saved it." The film editor generally comes in for a few bows and slaps his own back. The producer keeps mum until he sees how the public likes it. The supervisor gets a larger size hat with every success turned out, regardless of the party responsible for the success.

This personal glory idea which has now become a fad in studios is a detriment to all concerned. It creates dissension, lack of confidence and many petty quarrels. It is disrupting organizations and costing producers plenty. Art and temperament are hard to handle, but with agitators adding a stimulus, the temperaments get beyond control.

The industry is going to find before long that big capitalists will not tolerate the baby antics of executives, and will also find these capitalists gradually dismissing these glory-seekers and replacing them with men and women who will work in the interests of the company paying their salaries.

Stars, directors and supervisors who cannot be handled without great trouble will gradually be let go, and allowed to cool their ardor before they work again. This appears the only method to resort to create harmony and protect capital invested.

—Tamar Lane

### "Mikado" to be

#### Filmed by Pathe

Pathe is to produce "The Mikado" and "H.M.S. Pinafore," Gilbert & Sullivan operas, which will be filmed as all-talking and singing productions at Sound Studios, New York. Production will be by Robert T. Kane, with Josiah Zuro as musical director. Casts will include names from Broadway musical shows.

### Collegians On Location

The 100% talking Collegians are leaving this week for Yosemite where they will shoot No. 3 and 4 of the new series which is being adapted for the screen by Dick Smith and Pierre Couderc from the original idea by Carl Laemmle Jr. Phil Dunham has been assigned to collaborate with Pierre Couderc on the remaining Collegian talks.

**HARRISON WILEY**

ART DIRECTOR

"Columbia Pictures"

### NOW ON THE PRESS!

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## Color Photography A Reality

By GLEN GANO

Some studio must set a precedent to right the present situation caused by the commercial flop of some of the talkies, which strange to say are a success scientifically, and are here to stay as a support for the motion picture, but not to be one hundred percent of the business. The talkie idea will accomplish some wonderful results in entertainment for certain stories and successful plays when properly applied. The principal reason for the commercial failure of many, at present, is that the movies have always depended upon the small town theatres for their profit, along with foreign sales. Pictures are sold in the outside territories on the strength of successful runs at large theatres, principally in New York or Los Angeles. But now the small theatre man is not yet equipped to run pictures in sound, therefore, he says, "I'll run them as silents," and, of course, he expects to pay the same money as before with no additional price for sound, and with the millions expended on sound no one needs a paper and pencil to figure this situation out.

Talkies at best will always be canned entertainment. Motion pictures are successful because we can make them appear more beautiful than nature itself under certain conditions. Will the talkie ever be able to reproduce sound better than itself? The Victrola has not reached that stage, and records have been made a good many years.

Warner Brothers, who started the talkie idea that took the country by storm, and actually made them considerable money, have come to the fore again by sponsoring color photography, which should have been developed before the talkie. They are making tests of more than one color process to determine which to use. The most vital thing is that this innovation will fill in the empty space in the present motion picture, although Warners are not alone this time in the venture. I un-

derstand Sennett and Fox are also interested in color.

Millions have been expended to perfect the talkie, and not one cent for research work for photography, except by the individual cameraman out of his own pocket for years. I often hear people talking about this color process and that color process being perfected. No process or invention will ever be perfected until the studios get behind them, and make them a success, scientifically, like they have the talkie, then, in time commercial success will be realized.

The talkie has advanced far beyond the general technique of the motion picture to date. When I visit a real high class theatre, and listen to a good vaudeville show, then a motion picture is thrown on a twelve foot screen instead of the full width of the stage, at least semi-stereoscopic in black and white photography, and poorly done at that, because the talkie idea has received all the attention, and people begin to talk in that crowded space. Also, you can almost hear them say, I must step three paces back, stop, turn two paces left, stop, say my lines, hit the floor hard with my heels, slam the door, etc., so it will register sound on the film. I am convinced that the talkie is here, at least, two years before motion pictures were ready for them.

All the above mentioned improvements are available to the producing companies, and not at such an exorbitant expense as one might think. My first commercial experience with Panchromatic Film only cost the company a few thousand dollars more than it would have cost otherwise, and the photography helped the picture to gross nearly a million dollars at a production cost of \$65,000. Without the beautiful photography it could have been released just as an ordinary western picture, and possibly grossed \$200,000. The picture I have reference to was "The Silent Call," featuring "Strongheart, produced by the Trimble-

### "Carnival Man" Finished

"Carnival Man," a dramatic sketch with original songs, starring Walter Houston, has just been completed as a two-reel talker at Paramount's Long Island studio. It was directed by George Abbott.

Murfin Company, and released by First National.

The producing companies have no excuse for allowing the technique of the talkie to get ahead of the general technique of the motion picture. To correct this fault the producers should have research departments that are progressive, headed by real talent, and not politicians who hold their jobs by hand shaking alone. The companies owe this favor to themselves, and the future of the Motion Picture.

I have always observed in the legitimate show business that the best plays drew the largest houses, then why won't the same thing apply to the motion picture, after the newness of the talkie has worn off?

## Phonofilm Co.

### Issues Warning

Immediate prosecution will follow any unauthorized use of De Forest Phonofilm equipment, General Talking Pictures Corp., warns exhibitors, pointing to reports that salesmen other than those authorized by the company are offering devices claimed to be De Forest Phonofilm or manufactured under licenses of patents of Dr. Lee De Forest. No company aside from General Talking Pictures can deliver De Forest Phonofilm equipment, the company says.

\* \* \*

### Finishing F-N Film

William Beaudine is putting the directorial finishing touches on his initial talking picture, "Two Weeks Off," at the First National Studios. Featured in the cast of the First National-Vitaphone film are Dorothy Mackaill and Jack Mulhall.

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## Criticizes French Film Industry

R. F. Conrad, writing in *Everyones Magazine*, Australian film journal, paints the French film industry in rather dark colors. He relates his experiences as follows:

"Paris.—The French cinema industry, however, is not making the advance it should do, because the men behind the gun, the men who combat its activities, are destructive in their criticism when they should be constructive. They spend half their time and energy worrying how they can combat the American invasion, when they should be occupying themselves with the improvement and increased output of their own productions.

"In reference to the statement made recently by the President of the French Chamber Syndicate that they were endeavouring to improve their foreign market, my own experiences in buying French films will give some idea of their business.

"In the first instance the firm with whom I was negotiating the film tried to double-cross me by trying to sell the same film in Australia over my head.

"Unfortunately for them, their lack of knowledge of conditions in Australia proved their undoing, as the first people their agents approached in Sydney were the very people for whom I was buying the picture.

"The second case was more disastrous than the first and I had the utmost difficulty in eventually procuring the film. Instead of being given the consideration, one would expect under the circumstances, I was regarded with suspicion, and put to every inconvenience and expense.

"After having reviewed a film which I considered suitable for my buyers in Australia I approached the firm releasing the picture, negotiated the price and agreed upon the conditions and manner of payment.

I cabled my firm, stipulating the conditions and received a favorable reply. The money was duly deposited in the bank in Paris and the firm was notified. On calling on them the following day, however, I was

told rather abruptly that they had changed their mind and could not now accept the conditions.

However, in a country where the inhabitants are the most egotistical and least travelled in the world, one can hardly wonder at stupidity.

"Their business methods are obsolete and the sooner they are scrapped the sooner will their foreign trade expand.

"They have a most prejudicial outlook. The best illustration of this is to be present at one of their trade shows.

"If the film showing is French, even though it be a most mediocre picture, it is punctuated with occasional bursts of applause and the finish is the occasion for much enthusiasm and exclamation of 'Tres Bien,' 'Quel bon scenario!'

"If, on the other hand, the production is British, no matter how excellent it may be, it is received in dead silence and any remarks one may chance to overhear are derogatory.

"Trade shows in Paris are remarkable affairs and apparently invitations are sent out to every star, quasi star, extra and office boy in the industry.

"They are usually given in a theatre with full orchestra, before a crowded house composed principally of those already mentioned above, and possibly a few aunts and uncles they may have been able to bring along.

"Naturally they are all born critics, particularly the extras and small part players who invariably express their opinions for the whole world to hear and who pose and strut about the foyer as though they were million dollar stars.

"If the French cinema actors and actresses were only half as good on the screen as they think they are, they would be wonderful."

\* \* \*

### Sono-Art Completing

#### First All-Talker

Fred Newmeyer is shooting the final scenes on "Broadway Bound," Sono-Art's first all talking feature. Frances Agnew wrote the scenario and dialogue.

### OLIVE HASBROUCK SIGNED

Olive Hasbrouck has been signed by James Cruze to be starred in his next two-reel talkie featurette, which is scheduled to go into production within the next few days at Cruze's new studio, formerly the Chadwick Studio. This will be Olive's second talkie experience, her first was in Reginald Denney's picture, "Clear the Deck."

\* \* \*

### ERNEST HILLIARD IN TALKIES

Ernest Hilliard has been cast for a featured role in "Dynamite," Cecil B. DeMille's production for M-G-M. Hilliard has just recently completed the role of defense attorney in "The Gamblers," Michael Curtiz's special Vitaphone production for Warner Bros.

\* \* \*

### FRED KOHLER AT FIRST NAT'L

Fred Kohler is playing a Broadway racketeer in Alice White's new starring vehicle "Broadway Babies" which Mervyn LeRoy is directing for First National. Kohler is receiving much praise for his recent characterization of the brutal Captain Heckla in "The Leathernecks" by those who have enjoyed an advance glimpse of this unusual Pathe production.

\* \* \*

### RALPH GRAVES COMPLETES

Ralph Graves, who flits from acting to directing and back again, has just completed the leading male role opposite Olive Borden in "The Wildcat" for Columbia. Graves will be remembered for his splendid characterizations in "Submarine" and "The Flying Fleet," and will soon be seen in his first all-dialogue picture "Alimony Annie" for Warner Brothers, which will shortly be released.

### ARTHUR RANKIN IN LEGITIMATE

Another one of our screen artists "going legitimate" is Arthur Rankin, young juvenile actor, who at present is rehearsing for one of the leading roles in "Bad - Babies," a new play by George Scarborough shortly to be produced here. The play is a story of modern youth, and it is said, will probably have its premiere at the Mayan.

\* \* \*

### RETURNS TO SCREEN

Viola Dana is being starred in "One Splendid Hour" which Burton King is producing. This picture marks Viola's return to the screen after an absence of almost a year, in which time she was a guest star of a prominent stock company in Province, R. I. and also completed a 20-week vaudeville tour.

\* \* \*

### PAT O'MALLEY PREPARING

Pat O'Malley is busy preparing for his latest talkie role of the prize fight manager in "The Man I Love" which William Wellman will direct for Paramount.

This is O'Malley's second big talkie role, his first being that of Detective Tommy Glennon in the talkie version of the stage play "Nightstick," which United Artists are releasing under the title "Alibi."

\* \* \*

### BETTY BRONSON RECALLED

Betty Bronson has been busy for the last few days retaking scenes for her latest picture "She Knew Men" for Warner Brothers. Since it was found in "The Singing Fool" that Betty's voice recorded well, Warner Brothers engaged her for two more Vitaphone productions. She will soon be seen in "One Stolen Night" which is now in its final cutting.

\* \* \*

Unusual removal sale at Haimoff's Vanity Fair, 6378 Hollywood Blvd. —Adv.



# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

**"A LADY OF CHANCE,"** an M-G-M production.

Directed by Robert Leonard.

Screen story by Edmund Goulding.

Starring Norma Shearer; featuring John Mack Brown, Lowell Sherman and Gwen Lee.

## Critical Viewpoint:

Although the story of "A Lady of Chance" is hackneyed, a few directorial touches might have improved it and made it at least entertaining. As the picture now stands it is dull and conventional, with only two high spots—one being where the girl looks at the well gowned lady in the fine automobile only to discover the boy's mother is a poor, badly dressed woman. However, the dilapidated automobile and house were so exaggerated that the beholder felt the situation incredulous and loses what interest had been aroused in the cinema.

There is not enough contrast between the girl when she looks innocent trying to lure financial prospects and the other scenes where she is a hardboiled woman of the world. Hence the picture becomes monotonous. The feeling is engendered that the writer was so busy trying to give "twists" to the story that he neglected naturalness and human qualities. There was no reason for the girl to go to jail, except to make the photoplay different, as the crooks ran down the fire-escape the minute they heard the police. Instead of actually calling them, the girl would have threatened the crooks and they would have vanquished.

The acting is not particularly good. It should have been played in a light vein—the boy's being a Charles Ray part and the girl—just a lady of chance.

Norma Shearer looked and dressed attractively, but she lacked variety in her role.

John Mack Brown seems a little heavy, although this may be a matter of opinion.

Lowell Sherman and Gwen Lee were sophisticated and natural as the instigators of the badger game. Their apartment and clothes however, looked so costly that it would seem they

found their own racket too prosperous to chase Norma Shearer all over the country to get her to play their game.

## Box Office Angle:

It all depends how well Norma Shearer draws. If she is popular, her following will come to see her. But the picture probably will not be too big an attraction. Audiences may find it mildly amusing.

—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

## Molnar's "Prisoners"

Titled by Paul Perez

Paul Perez has completed titling George Fitzmaurice's "The Man and the Moment," co-starring Rod LaRocque and Billie Dove. He is now writing the titles for Corinne Griffith's "Prisoners," written by Ferenc Molnar and directed by William A. Seiter.

This is Perez' eighth titling assignment for First National. Among the other pictures he has titled for that studio are "His Captive Woman," "Why Be Good?" "Weary River," "Saturday's Children," "Love and the Devil" and "Children of the Ritz."

\* \* \*

## Ray Perkins Heads

F. N. Song Writers

Ray Perkins, representing M. Witmark & Co., music publishers, has come to First National studios to take charge of the theme song department and will assign various song writers to the different productions, also have charge of the preparation of music for Vitaphone pictures.

\* \* \*

## Casson Ferguson Dies

Casson Ferguson, recently assigned one of the leading roles in "Dynamite," M-G-M picture which Cecil B. DeMille is directing, died yesterday from a brief illness with pneumonia. Ferguson had been a leading figure on the screen for many years.

**"CAPTAIN LASH,"** a Fox production.

Directed by John Blystone.

Screen story by Daniel Tomlinson and Laura Hasse.

Starring Victor McLaglen; Featuring Clyde Cook and Claire Windsor.

## Critical Viewpoint:

Victor McLaglen is suffering the fate of so many players who become famous overnight through one part. In "What Price Glory?" McLaglen gave one of the outstanding performances of screen history. Faced with the problem of killing the new star by holding him to this one type or letting McLaglen branch into different characters, Fox chose the latter course. It seemed the wiser one, but unfortunately the ensuing pictures have not always been so good.

In "Captain Lash" McLaglen plays a stoker who is a devil with the ladies. But somehow the part Clyde Cook plays is more popular with the audience. The two however, make a team that is worth cultivating. The story is a little complicated. A few romantics may not like the end but it is the only logical one, for even in a comedy Claire Windsor falling in love with the stoker is incongruous.

And as McLaglen is honest though rough, the final fade-out is the only one possible. Probably the film would have been better if it had stuck to the adventures associated with the care-free and heart-free men of the sea, instead of developing into a crook story.

Victor McLaglen does all that can be done with the role of Captain Lash. If one likes McLaglen, and I do, one will enjoy his work.

Clyde Cook has the fatter part—the comedy—and audi-

ences like to laugh. Cook stands out as McLaglen's buddy.

Claire Windsor is attractive and competent. Albert Conti is always pleasing.

## Box Office Angle:

The title "Captain Lash" has a swing that associated with Victor McLaglen might draw. The production has enough rough stuff in it to please the average spectator, although it is doubtful that most theatregoers will think it above the average fare.—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

## Sound for Russian Studios

Washington.—The film committee of the Soviet government has decided to investigate sound film devices with a view of producing sound pictures at Russian studios, the M. P. Section of the Dept. of Commerce is advised. Electrical engineers have been commissioned to make reports on the various systems available.

\* \* \*

## Conrad, Gottler, Mitchell

Write Songs for "U"

Con Conrad, Broadway song writer, Archie Gottler and Sidney Mitchell, have just completed a set of song and dance numbers for Universal's super production, "Broadway." Gus Arnheim's Coconut Grove orchestra is playing in the Night Club set for the movietone version. All the tunes are being prepared for national sheet music sales as well as being recorded on phonograph records by Arnheim.

## DONN HAYES

FILM EDITOR

Recently returned from New York,  
Editing Sound Pictures

Now Editing for Tiffany-Stahl

**"LIFE"**



# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

**"THE BRIDGE OF SAN LOUIS REY,"** an M-G-M production.

Directed by Charles Brabin.

Scenario by Alice D. G. Miller.

Cast: Lily Damita, Don Alvarado, Racquel Torres, Ernest Torrence, Paul Ellis, Michael Vavitch, Henry B. Walthall, Duncan Renaldi, Emily Fitzroy.

*Critical Viewpoint:*

"The Bridge of San Louis Rey," announced as one of M-G-M's outstanding efforts of the year, is going to be received with much conflict of opinion. Many will regard it as a very worth while picture, others will rate it as only another fiction best seller that proved a dud when adapted to the screen.

As entertainment, "The Bridge of San Louis Rey" covers a wide range which alternately strikes the beholder as good, bad or indifferent. The film has two or three unusually striking moments, but when these high spots are analyzed the reviewer finds that their effectiveness is based almost entirely upon the dashing personality displayed by Lily Damita in the role of La Perichole, a firey and sexy dancer who cooly vamps her men or kicks them downstairs with equal dexterity.

In fact, reflecting upon the film after leaving the theatre, one arrives at the conclusion that if Miss Damita were taken out of the picture there would be no picture.

In defense of the producers it might be said that all who have read "The Bridge of San Louis Rey" in book form recognize the fact that it is a very difficult piece of material to transcribe upon the screen. The construction of the story is narrative, not dramatic, and contains so many side plots and characters that the producers faced a trying problem in trying to stick to the original work and yet turn out an appealing photoplay.

Miss Damita's role is so colorful and her characterization so forceful that the preview audience did not seem to appreciate or understand the part. There was a great deal of giggling and laughing at the

wrong time which proved that the audience was not in full accord and sympathy with the story. This undoubtedly is detracting from the picture, as far as the general public is concerned, it would be advisable for M-G-M to re-edit some of Miss Damita's scenes and curb the violence of some of her actions.

The ending of the picture may appeal to some theatregoers but it impresses the reviewer as weak, incomplete and unconvincing. The religious hokum tacked on in the last few feet is hokum of the cheapest sort and is practically an insult to intelligent thinkers of this day and age. The producers attempt to make out a good case for God but in reality are asserting that God is powerless to right the wrongs on earth and his only alternative is to kill off all the good folks and leave the bad ones on this planet.

From this angle, perhaps, after all, we are judging our gangsters too hastily. They may be instruments of the Lord sent down to knock off all the righteous ones and send them to heaven.

The other players in the cast are eclipsed by the colorful characterization portrayed by Lily Damita but good performances are turned in by the entire cast, which includes Don Alvarado, Raquel Torres, Duncan Renaldi, Michael Vavitch and others.

*Box Office Angle:*

On merit alone "The Bridge of San Louis Rey" is not a high calibre attraction. The fame and popularity of the book may draw them in, however. Opinions will be divided as to the quality of the entertainment. Would advise showmen to look this one over for themselves.

—Tamar Lane.

**"THE DIVINE LADY,"** a First National picture.

Starring Corinne Griffith.

Directed by Frank Lloyd.

Scenario by Agnes Christine Johnston.

Cast: Victor Varconi, H. B. Warner, Ian Keith, William Conklin, Marie Dressler and Montagu Love.

*Critical Viewpoint:*

This production proves once again that it takes a big story to make a big picture. Large sets, huge crowds and costly scenes are not enough.

"The Divine Lady" has a big theme but the story itself as worked out in plot and situations is lacking in the elements necessary to make the production successful as a super feature at raised admission prices.

"The Divine Lady" has been beautifully mounted, effectively photographed, in fact the film boasts considerable optical appeal. There are also some moments of tenderness and fine feeling. But these are too few and far between to generate audience interest and suspense to an important degree. The film throughout is slow, episodic and at times is even draggy to the extent of being boring.

"The Divine Lady," obviously, is the kind of biographical data which makes highly entertaining reading but is not sufficiently dramatic and vital to succeed as screen material.

There are some naval battle scenes which are easily the finest ever staged for the screen, surpassing even those in "Ben Hur." These add a needed thrill to the picture but they are not enough to carry the entire picture.

Naturally, the producers, in filming history such as this must stick substantially to actual facts and not take too much licence. This handicapped them in several situations which might have been built along far more effective lines if the story were mere fiction.

Corinne Griffith gives an admirable portrayal of Lady Hamilton. It is one of the best things she has done in recent years and should win her much personal glory, even though the film itself may not appeal to

many of her admirers. Victor Varconi also contributes an excellent performance in the role of Nelson. It is the finest thing he has done on the screen to date.

Frank Lloyd has done a creditable job with the direction, handling both the spectacular elements of the story and the human side with equal skill.

*Box Office Angle:*

While "The Divine Lady" may not arouse any serious complaints from theatregoers it is not a film that will stir any enthusiasm with the general public. As a road show the production will not make the grade. As a general release, cut down to six or seven reels "The Divine Lady" should prove successful.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

## Chevalier to Ziegfeld

Maurice Chevalier has left for New York. He has been loaned by Paramount to Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr., for a special four weeks' engagement on Ziegfeld's New Amsterdam Roof in New York City. The French star arrives at the Grand Central station in the metropolis on Saturday. In the meantime, his first starring picture, "Innocents of Paris," an all-talking and singing production, is being cut and edited at the studios in Hollywood.

\* \* \*

## "Redemption"

Howard J. Green is writing the script for "Redemption," which will be produced by Columbia. Frank Capra will direct.

\* \* \*

## Stage Star Signed

Belle Baker will make three talking pictures for E. Asher and Edward Small, one in the east and two here.

**CHARLES R. CONDON**

**Writer**

— :: —

**Now In Production**

**A William Fox Special**

**“JOY STREET”**

**Directed By**

**RAYMOND CANNON**

— :: —

**Current Release**

**“Let’s Make Whoopee”**

**[Red Wine]**



**10c**

*News, Reviews,  
Opinions*

*Published Every  
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# THE FILM MERCURY

*VERITAS*



*VINCIT*

Vol. 9 No. 17  
Sixteen Pages

HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA  
FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 1929

*Edited by*  
TAMAR LANE

## **RKO To Absorb Pathe, Report**

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**Electrical Trust Must Merge Or Fail**

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## **Claim Producers Signed 'Suicide' Talkie Contracts**

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**Fox In Radical Change Of Policy**

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## **Film Boom Expected In April**

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### **REVIEWS**

**"The Wild Party"**

**"This Is Heaven"**

**"Woman Who Needed Killing"**

**"Sonny Boy"**

## Tamar Lane

### "U" FORCE PEPPED UP

Over at Universal City they are all pepped up over "The Show Boat." Expect it to be one of the big clean-ups of the year.

If "Showboat" proves a big success there will be one man on the Universal lot who will do a lot of clucking. That man is Eddie Montagne, head of the scenario department. It is said that Montagne always had faith in this story, but found it difficult to convince anyone else of this fact. The cry went up, no plot, no plot, how can you make a big picture without plot? Montagne contended that melodrama was not needed in a big story. He succeeded in getting Harry Pollard, the director, as enthusiastic as himself on the story's possibilities, and the two buckled down to hard work. They were asked to insert thrills, punches, to pep it up, but religiously adhered to their original plan, of putting Edna Ferber's story on the screen. The effort is completed, and the picture was shown at Palm Beach and Miami Sunday. It is said that Florenz Ziegfeld was so pleased with the picture that he wishes to run it in his own theatre.

Universal, like every other film organization, needs two or three big productions every season to build prestige and support the sales organization. If "Show Boat" goes over as every one hopes, it will aid greatly in stimulating sales for Universal.

"U" has "Broadway," now being completed by Carl Laemmle Jr., to follow up with, and finally "The Minstrel Man," which is also planned as a special.

With this trio all clicking at once Universal will be back in the limelight and "Uncle" Carl can sit back and watch the money roll in.

### ANOTHER FINE HERSHOLT PORTRAYAL

While Hersholt gave a splendid performance in "Abie's

# RKO to Absorb Pathe, Report

## Ellbee to Release 18 Delf Sound Shorts

Series of 18 all talking shorts, one every week, will be made by Harry Delf, for states rights release through Ellbee Pictures. "Meet the Family," first in the series, has been completed. Delf is author of the stories and will direct.

\* \* \*

## S. F. Orpheum to Close

San Francisco.—April 19 is the date set for the closing of the Orpheum here which will be remodeled and redecorated and controlled by Klaw & Erlanger for legitimate shows. Radio-Keith-Orpheum plans a new house here.

\* \* \*

## No Hope for "Blue Law" Relief in Pennsylvania

Harrisburg.—All action on measures affecting relief from "blue laws" has been indefinitely postponed by the legislature. This kills all hope for remedial measures this session.

\* \* \*

## British Films for Austria

Vienna.—M. Felce has purchased the Vita Studio here to establish a British production unit.

\* \* \*

## Doug and Mary Consider Shakespearian Vehicle

The joint vehicle which Doug and Mary plan will probably be a Shakespearian play, reported to be "The Taming of the Shrew." Plans for "Romeo and Juliet" are declared abandoned.

"Irish Rose," stealing the picture as far as the reviewers were concerned. He delivers an even finer portrayal in "The Younger Generation." It is probably one of the best things he has ever done. Hersholt's work, in fact, practically saves the picture, which is mediocre for the most part.

It seems pretty well settled that Hersholt leaves "U" at the expiration of his present contract. He has announced no new affiliation as yet, however, and it is reported he may free lance.

## Boom Expected In Early April

April 10th is expected to hear the starting gun of the long delayed renewal of production activities in Hollywood. The big studios have been more or less idle for the past two or three months, due to their inability to arrive at a decision as to how to proceed on next season's product.

Most of them have now definitely decided in regard to future product and are hastily preparing to resume production. In the meantime many of the big company's have been falling behind in their releasing schedules and will have to do some rapid shooting to recover ground.

As soon as these studios get going it should mean better times for thousands of movie workers who have just passed through one of the worst slack periods that has hit the film colony in several years. Many workers who formerly were comparatively well off with bank accounts to their credit are now practically destitute and are depending largely upon friends for sustenance. Renewed activities will be a godsend to them and start the money flowing in Hollywood once again.

\* \* \*

## Sound Engineers

### Arrive in Town

Hugh McDowell Jr. and John Tribby, recording engineers arrived this week at the RKO studios in Hollywood from the RCA Photophone headquarters in New York City to join the staff of experts at work on talking Radio Pictures.

The sound staff at RKO studios will be further augmented with the arrival shortly of Gilbert Brown and James Maresca, likewise from the RCA Photophone Company in New York.

\* \* \*

## In "Rainbow"

Rudy Cameron has been signed for a role in "Rainbow" at Warner Bros.

One of the next film moves is expected to be the absorbing of Pathe by RKO, according to latest rumors. Joseph P. Kennedy is said to be now working on a deal along these lines and some sort of a transaction is believed to be under way.

According to reports from New York, the proposition would mean the combining of the RKO and Pathe sales organizations into one selling force, thus eliminating much overhead expense.

The RKO and Pathe studio staffs would also be welded together into a single producing organization under control of one production chief. Whether both studios would continue to operate is a matter of speculation, but it is believed likely that they would eventually be placed under one roof if the amalgamation goes through.

Kennedy is understood to have been endeavoring for some time to swing a deal for the merger of Pathe. A far better deal could have probably been negotiated a few months ago, but much time has been lost and the film situation has changed considerably, and not in a manner deemed favorable to Kennedy's interests.

Wall St. activities indicate that Kennedy and his associates have been devoting much of their energies to working the price of Pathe stock up so that the assets of the concern can be traded or sold at a greater valuation in the event that the company is absorbed.

It is reported that RKO executives do not favor the continuation of Pathe as an individual organization under present conditions but whether they plan to eliminate the Pathe brand name altogether is not known. Past records reveal the fact that the radio magnates quickly submerge the identity of any company they absorb and that this policy will be pursued in their film activities is evidenced by the speedy manner in which they willed off the F.B. O. trade mark and substituted RKO.



**ANABEL LANE***Says*

The attitude adopted by critics towards Equity, because they have suspended Jeanne Eagels from stage work for a year, is nothing short of stupid. The scribblers persist in glorifying this actress in print and in denouncing Equity. The stand taken by the critics is that Miss Eagels is a remarkable actress, therefore they spoof the theatrical union.

No one will dispute the thespic ability of Jeanne Eagels—but the fact that she is a fine actress did not justify her conduct to her fellow players and audiences which had paid to see this star. Stars of stage and screen very often think themselves privileged people who can do as they wish regardless of harmful consequences to others. They seem to feel they have a special dispensation from Providence, that mere mortals should worship them in awe and tolerate behavior that would be considered disgusting in plain John and Mary Smith.

When a star by his or her conduct closes a company, thereby hitting the livelihood of others, that particular star should not only be banned from the stage but from the screen. And in time, as a protection to all producers, this course of action will be taken.

This is not a sermon on behavior, as the life of an actor or actress is his or her own, EXCEPT when it involves the financial interest of others.

It is bad enough to have to put up with the vagaries and insolences of certain stars without film reviewers making martyrs of selfish men and women.

There is in the field of motion picture writers a boy who is a credit to his profession. Not only is he exceptionally well liked but his honesty of opinion and expression, vocal or written, make him an outstanding figure in Hollywood—Jerry Hoffman—kind to all—yet a capable and humorous writer.

**Fox In Radical Change Of Policy?****No Profit On This Film Deal**

Just a little joke on the capitalist. A certain director of independent features, owing over \$80,000 to a finance company, was attached. They found nothing valuable but an expensive radio in his home. They carted this away as an "asset." The next day the department store that owned the radio made the finance outfit return it, and guarantee the store it was not damaged; they did.

The joke is, the finance outfit is now out hauling charges, pay for two men, and bond fee, about \$70.00 in addition to the \$80,000.

\* \* \*

**Movie Crowd Lose at Races**

The Coffroth Handicap, held at Aqua Caliente, Mexico, last week was occasion for a movie week-end turnout. Hollywood film moguls are said to have lost plenty playing the "ponies."

Charlie Burr, Ben Goetz, Johnny Hines, Bessie Love and a few others came away smiling—yes, they won. But that's not saying how much—or what the others lost. You know the "ponies."

A well known and unusually talented stage director, working for one of the big film companies, told me that he believes in two years all of the talking pictures will be done by stage directors. He claimed that after seeing the dialogue efforts of two celluloid directors whose work he had admired in silent photoplays, he felt convinced that time would eliminate the film people for those of the theatre.

On the other hand a motion picture director said that he had almost been distracted to madness by the slow tempo and lack of knowledge of action displayed by stage directors. He claimed that theatrical people did not realize a moving picture should have movement.

So the battle goes on—time and costly experiments will decide the answer.

**German Industry Is Hard Hit**

London. — Exhibitors and producers in Germany are again complaining of the crushing burden of the Entertainments Tax.

At the present moment, the German film industry, owing to unemployment, the sustained cold weather, and widespread illness, is drifting more and more into catastrophe. From theatres it is reported that takings show a falling-off up to 40 per cent, as compared with the same month last year.

The shrinkage in audiences is still further threatened, and German high-grade productions with such circumstances cannot be maintained for the next year. It is requested that a new arrangement be introduced as early as possible, without waiting for the settlement of inter-state budgets, since the amounts concerned, which are relatively very small for the total budgets, can be otherwise saved.

Appeals have also been addressed to the Burgomaster of Berlin, stating that kinemas are in a state of urgent necessity, the influence of which has already begun to make itself felt on German high-grade production.

Further, that the German film industry expects the city of Berlin, as the main production work-shop of the German film and as central exchange of the European film trade, to go ahead at once with the postponement of payments due and the substantial reduction of entertainment taxes, including those for the past months.

The Burgomaster is requested, in his capacity of president of the Association of German Municipalities, to recommend this to other towns, and the legal basis for such procedure is provided in the emergency paragraph of the decree regarding the Entertainments Tax.

William Fox has decided upon a radical change in production policy and in future will make all of his features as talkies, according to report.

While silent versions will still be produced, all features in future, it is said, will be made with the talkies in view and the silent versions will only be given secondary consideration. Paramount recently adopted the same policy.

This report, if true, will come as something of a surprise to the film industry because Fox has been one company which has been steadfastly sticking to silent films, only making a small percentage of dialogue pictures on the side.

If Fox adopts a strict sound feature program it will probably mean many more changes in personnel. During the past few weeks there have been several changes on the Fox staff and it may have been that these shifts were made in preparation for the new production policy.

Notwithstanding new announcements just made to the effect that the entire M-G-M studio organization will be intact, the rumor still persists that Fox plans many changes in M-G-M personnel. These changes, it is understood, will effect executives, directors and players.

While it is considered likely that Fox will favor the continuance of the M-G-M brand name, it is not believed that he will approve of maintaining the entire costly M-G-M studio organization as it now stands when he can work tremendous economies by combining the two into one unified group.

\* \* \*

**Gets Warner Lead**

Nancy Welford has been signed by Warner Bros. for the lead in "The Gold Diggers."

\* \* \*

**Will Support Star**

Olive Tell will have an important role in the next Dolores Costello vehicle at Warners.

\* \* \*

Nick Lukas, vaudeville favorite, will appear in "The Gold Diggers" for Warner Bros.



# Electric Interests Must Merge to Gain Control of Film Industry

The radio and electrical moguls always seek to control any industry in which they are interested, and it may be taken for granted that they have definite plans for domination of the movie game. In many respects they now have the film industry under control by virtue of the manner in which they have sewed up the talkie racket. This is a more or less subtle and vague control, however, and the electrical interests will not long be satisfied with such a status.

Outright and obvious control is undoubtedly their actual goal and they are moving slowly but surely toward the mark. To achieve this calls for several more mergers, which will be forthcoming in all probability before many months have passed.

William Fox undoubtedly threw a monkey wrench into the machinery of plans laid out by the Electrical crowd, when he bought control of Loew's and M-G-M. At the same time this move was probably a life-saver for Fox.

The amalgamation of Fox and Loew gives William Fox such a powerful and firmly entrenched organization that the Electrical interests now have a real fight on their hands before they can hope for outright domination of the film field. They will take over Paramount—if they have not already done so—is a foregone conclusion. Otherwise their position in the industry will be of only secondary importance.

It is understood that the Radio-Electrical group have big plans for the expansion of the newly named RKO company, and hope to make it the giant film concern of the industry. To accomplish this in the face of continued competition from

Fox, Paramount, Universal and others, however, is going to be a long and tedious task, even with good breaks of luck. It is the wrong course to pursue if the Radio moguls wish to gain quick and definite control of the motion picture business. The speedier and cheaper method in the long run will be to buy up the opposition, thus removing competition and gaining immediate domination.

In some quarters it is believed that the electric interests are only concerned with the movie business as a market for electrical and sound equipment. The future of the photoplay as an entertainment, it is said, means nothing to them only insofar as it effects the sale of their electrical supplies, and brings in royalties on their talkie patent rights.

## In "Marianne"

"B.B.B.," noted vaudevillian and monologuing host of Los Angeles' Coffee Dan's night cafe, at last has been captured by the movies. He will play with Marion Davies in "Marianne."

## On Long Trip

Beginning the longest journey ever undertaken for a film venture, W. S. Van Dyke this week departed on the Santa Fe "Chief," enroute to the wilds of the great Uganda region in Africa where he will screen "Trader Horn" for M-G-M.

## Dialoguing for "New Orleans"

Dialogue and sound sequences are now being made for the Tiffany-Stahl, Reginald Barker special production, "New Orleans," which is soon to be released.

## Warner to Play In "Green Goddess"

H. B. Warner, who is now playing an important role in "The Argyle Case" for Warner Brothers, is already preparing for his next talkie role for that studio. He has been assigned the principal supporting role in the Vitaphone feature "The Green Goddess," George Arliss' starring vehicle.

## Viola Dana in Stage Play

Viola Dana is again leaving the screen for the stage. She has signed with Henry Duffy to play the starring role in "Spite Corners," which will open at the President theatre in San Francisco, March 30th. Frank Craven will direct the play and is now on his way to San Francisco from New York.

## Milestone to Direct Norma

Lewis Milestone will direct Norma Talmadge in the star's next picture for United Artists. Gilbert Roland, according to report will play the heavy. No leading man has been announced as yet.

## Logan to Play In Townley Story

Jacqueline Logan has been signed to play the lead in "The Batchelor Girl" for Columbia. It is an original story by Jack Townley.

## Chase Borrowed For "U" Feature

Charlie Chase has been borrowed by Universal to play a role in "You Can't Buy Love," a feature to be directed by Arch Heath. Jean Hersholt is also playing a prominent part.

## Wheeler Plans Sound Feature

Cliff Wheeler is starting production in a few days on a new talking feature entitled "The Prince of Hearts." It is a colorful romance laid in Austria, written by John Reinhardt.

Norman Kerry and George Fawcett have already been signed for principal roles. Barbara Worth will play the leading feminine role, upon completion of her work in "Below the Deadline," which Lon Young is producing for Chesterfield. Other players will be added to the cast.

Cliff Wheeler will personally direct. Ray Monde is acting as production manager.

The production will have talking sequences and be synchronized throughout. Headquarters are at the Tec-Art studios.

## Two New Stories Bought By RKO

Two more stories have been purchased for Radio Pictures during the current year, William Le Baron, vice-president in charge of production announced this week.

The first is "Tanned Legs," by George Hull, and the second, by Gwendolyn Ranger Wormser, is "Higer River."

## Pascal Writing Story for Swanson

Ernest Pascal, whose clever play, "The Marriage Bed," scored one of the outstanding hits of the season, both in Los Angeles and New York, is now writing a special screen vehicle for Gloria Swanson. Pascal is also writing the dialogues, which are expected to be among the best that have been done for the talkies to date.

Edmund Goulding will direct, according to report.

# ROBERT LORD

## Under Contract to Warner Brothers

A VITAPHONE home is one where the parrot talks and the kettle sings. But what I started out to say was that I've completed a crook story that's different. I know the difficulties of "crashing the editorial gate" with an original, but this one is so damned good, it may prove an exception. Let's hope so. JAMES MADISON, prolific writer of all forms of comedy and dramatic material for stage and screen. 323 North Citrus Avenue, Los Angeles—(Phone ORegon 5627)



Arthur Rosson

directing

"POINTS WEST"

starring

HOOT GIBSON

# THE FILM PARADE

*As seen by* RICHARD WATTS JR.

Photoplay Editor, *New York Herald-Tribune*

As an earnest chronicler of cinema happenings, it is probably my duty to write about that most dramatically skillful of all the talking photoplays, "The Letter," expressing proper admiration for the brilliant acting of the personally unpopular Miss Jeanne Eagles; the forceful challenge the work offers to both stage and screen, as we have known them, and the provocative hint it provides that the East is to become once more a serious rival to the West as a production center. Yet, somehow, the arrival of Miss Lupe Velez in what is most assuredly our midst seems to demand prior consideration.

No matter what you may think of the debonair Miss Velez privately, you can hardly deny her news value. She is, in the most literal sense, the Talk of the Town, and, though you hate practically everything about her, it is impossible to dispute the prowess of her showmanship. Virtually single-handed, completely on her merits as a vigorous personality, she has overthrown the handicaps of a commonplace picture, bad judgment and one of the worst starts imaginable, and, by the success of her personal appearances, has changed "Lady of the Pavements" from a complete failure into a real hit.

I might as well confess that I set down the news of Miss Velez's individual triumph somewhat grudgingly, though with considerable admiration. I imagine I am not being unfair to the sentiments of my colleagues in suggesting that few visiting players have made such a completely unpleasant first impression on the local cinema observers. It is, therefore, a tribute to the skill, if not the good manners, of Miss Velez, that she should be able to overthrow so completely the original sentiments concerning her. Perhaps, too, it is a tribute to the New York reviewers that

they were fair enough to note the striking virtues of the little Mexican, despite their personal attitude towards her.

It may sound like cheap local patriotism to say so, but I think that the trouble with Miss Velez was that she forgot her geographical distinctions. Because a certain act of hers had succeeded in Hollywood and Chicago, she thought it would be triumphant in New York, also. It happened that it wasn't, but there is really no reason to blame the young lady because she guessed wrong. It is even conceivable that her publicity department should accept most of the blame for her initial failure. As a matter of strict justice, it deserves considerable credit for her later success, likewise.

In keeping with a curious custom prevalent in the cinema, a luncheon and reception for the new star was given by her producing firm on the occasion of her arrival in the great city. It will not be my purpose here to attack or defend this social institution, but I certainly should pause long enough to deny any popular suspicion that such gatherings are cold, judicial affairs in which stern, forbidding critics and columnists examine austerely and maliciously the shrinking Hollywood visitor in quest of defects. As a matter of fact, the journalistic guests are hopeful, sympathetic creatures, who are pathetically friendly and bashfully delighted at the chance to gain even momentary contact with a famous screen personage. In their breathless amicability, they may try to hide their shy joy behind a mask of cynicism, but, most certainly, it is only a mask, concealing a vast and rather pathetic gratitude.

All of us had heard, of course, of "Whoopee Lupe," the Mad, Untamed, Barbaric, Uninhibited Wildcat of the Mexican Mountains. We had

been told of her artless pranks, her gallant freedom from the conventions, her gay insouciance and all the rest of it. I think it is safe to say that we were a little afraid that she would turn out to be, despite all the heralding, just a shy and sedate young person, being terribly lady-like all over the place. Fortunately she proved to be no such disappointment, but there were moments when I, for one, was a bit sorry she wasn't.

The ridiculous thing about her performance was the wild lack of necessity for it. Since it happens that Miss Velez is, to a reasonable extent, a less than sedate young lady, the efforts she expended on proving how terribly untamed she was reminded us, rather closely, of the historic case of gilding the lily. We New York observers are, as I think I have hinted, a friendly and long suffering lot, but, after Miss Velez had, in her merry way, told one critic, just as a great big joke, that she didn't like him and that he must leave her party at once; had put ice down the neck of another guest, tossed bread crumbs at a third and put salt into the cigar of a fourth and then, as an added attraction, told us of the fun she had making a Chicago reporter think she had murdered a man before his eyes, we began to feel that she was a trifle unimaginative in her methods. I'm afraid Hollywood practical jokes are not considered quite Big Time in New York.

It must be said for Miss Velez that she added an emotional quality to her luncheon not commonly found at placid cinema parties. Usually the guests at such functions sit around calmly, seldom being stirred by the more vigorous emotions. At the Mexican's party, though, they were to be discovered looking at their hostess with a growing dislike that

was not exactly filled with politeness.

It was not long, however, before we began to see how unfair we had been to the poor young lady. She was working far too hard for comfort at her act and it seemed to be flopping, but it was not difficult to find something pathetic about an attractive young woman's despairing efforts to live up to what she thought we expected of her. I know that I, who began by disliking her with some intensity, ended up by feeling sorry for her. She just wasn't getting over, and it seemed a shame.

Apparently her publicity experts recognized her mistake and advised her to tone down the act a bit, for two days later she seemed an entirely different and immensely more likable person. Apparently she had learned that there is something to be said for the quality of restraint. I suppose I should hastily add that too much restraint on the part of Miss Velez would have been as fatal as too much abandon had threatened to be. Fortunately she discovered the proper halfway point. The result is that her stage act is enormously and properly popular, revealing the little Mexican as a vivid and rather exciting personality and an expert performer. She is, I think, several times more attractive in person than on the screen and, if she wanted to try the local revue stage, I am sure she would be tremendously popular. She has learned a lot about New York in a few days.

\* \* \*

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has made William Outerson a member of its reading staff. Captain Outerson is the author of the novel "Jean Cameron"—his short stories appear regularly in the Atlantic Monthly, and one of them has found a place in the new O'Brien collection of the best short stories



## Claim Producers Signed Suicide Contracts With Electric Trust

When the great rush was on for sound equipment and the anxiety of most big studios to get talkies on the market, to offset the start Warner Bros. had with Vitaphone, producers are said to have signed "suicide" contracts with the electrical people. These contracts, it is claimed, called for a term of 44 years, with the studio never owning the apparatus, nor did the theatres that installed it at prices ranging from \$7,500 to \$15,000, depending on the size of the house. They had only the right to use it for a limited time, and the electrical people could remove it later if they so desired. This also applied to studio recording devices upon which the electrical people hold the patents.

Each studio reported signing an electric company contract, it is said, was compelled to allow the electrical people to examine their books as to their earnings. They were asked to pay a royalty of \$100,000 a year plus 20% of the net profits and were limited to the number of films they could make with sound, it is said.

The studio had to buy its equipment from the "Trust," and employ their so-called "experts" at salaries of from \$500 to \$1,500 per week. They were asked to build sound stages and did so, and now sound stages are said to be unnecessary, but it has cost the studios millions of dollars to learn this.

One sound stage built by "experts" was so sound proof that they could not record anything. It became necessary to remove some of the four foot thick wall before it was practical. This same studio discovered they could get results just as good without a sound stage, and by simply hanging carpets and felt around the set to be "shot," and the cost was nil.

Most studios also failed to realize that there were other men of ability working on sound devices, some of which have proven just as good as any on the market, and for one-fifth the cost to studio or exhibitor.

"The 'Trust' wanted to pull a General Film on the industry by getting a monopoly, it is said. Remember what happened to General Film, the trust of yesterday; a company that tried to control film, studios, actors, cameras, projection machines and everything else by so-called 'patents.' Who can say but the electrical crowd hope to do the same thing?

No exhibitor, in our opinion, should install high priced equipment to show talkies until he has seen the many new devices on the market. This may save him money and give him better results. The exhibitor today is paying four times what he used to pay for pictures. Short films in silent form six months ago sold for ten dollars a day. The same calibre picture today nets the exchange \$75.00 a day with sound. Some feature films costing \$60,000 or \$80,000 to produce with sound are returning over \$600,000 to the producer.

\* \* \*

Wesley Ruggles is the latest recipient of a Radio Pictures contract.

William Le Baron, vice president in charge of production at RKO studios, announced. Ruggles has been signed to direct "The Viennese Charmer."

## Columbia Bunch Now Selling Stock to the Public

It looks as if the Cohn Bros. and the rest of the Columbia Pictures bunch have decided, like other film men, to pass their film worries over to the public and let the latter do some of the worrying in regard to present movie affairs.

Columbia is floating a stock issue consisting of 25,000 shares preferred at \$42.50 per share, and 100,000 shares of common at \$31.00 per share.

According to a prospectus sent out by Goddard & Co., underwriters, the common stock now being offered "is being purchased from individuals and the proceeds thereof will not accrue to the company." This seems to indicate that some of the Columbia crowd are taking advantage of the opportunity to sell their holdings.

It is interesting to note that, according to the prospectus, the Cohn Bros. and Joe Brandt will also retain some of the new common stock and "will draw salaries which, from July 1, 1929, with respect to two of them, will be in excess of their present compensation."

Which are the lucky two who have been voted increases, and which is the unfortunate one of the trio who is being left out in the cold, the prospectus fails to mention. The in-

dustry will have to do a little guessing for itself.

With the present state of affairs in the film business the underwriters of the Columbia stock issue are not apt to find a very responsive buying public. Columbia is not well enough known nor is the company established on a firm enough basis, considering its powerful competitors, to be looked upon with great favor by cautious investors.

These are perilous times in the movie game and the small independents such as Columbia are liable to be crushed at any time. Investors may take a chance with Paramount or Fox stock but Columbia is apt to be regarded as too much of a speculation.

\* \* \*

### First College

#### Feature Started

The first feature length "Collegian" picture is being shot at Universal, with Nat Ross discarding the megaphone and using sign language and whippers. The lengthy Collegiate will be a talkie. Maurice Kussell is directing a group of his dancers in the theatre scene in the new Universal picture, which is said to be quite a pretentious affair.

*paul gangelin*

is now writing an original, all-dialogue story for pathe, wise money.

and wrote office Scandal, "the greatest newspaper story ever screened, and that goes doubled," m.p. news, in collaboration with jack jungmeyer.



**TAMAR LANE**  
Editor

**E. M. McCray**  
Business Manager

**ANABEL LANE**  
Associate Editor

Subscription Rates: \$3 for 52 issues; \$2 for 26 issues anywhere in the United States and its Possessions. 25% surcharge on Canadian subscription. 50% surcharge on Foreign subscriptions.

Mercury Publishing Company will not be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, letters or photographs and all such material is received at the sender's risk.

FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 1929

## Child Stars On Boom Again

Just as we were gloating over the fact that the day of children stars was over—that the infants of the screen world were just too much to swallow—the talkies brought the little tots into prominence once more. The silent drama had advanced to the stage where even that fine little actor, Jackie Coogan had turned to vaudeville for his living. While there are many complaints made against the dialogue films, probably the most scathing is that they are undoing the work it took years for the movie to accomplish.

The producers had advanced audiences to the place where they wanted to see something that did not cause an "oh isn't that cute?" The fans had shown a preference for heroes and heroines who had human frailties and stories that had guts. Children appeared in pictures as incidentals, instead of having innocuous, impossible situations built around them.

The talking pictures in this one phase has taken the celluloid industry back ten years. For few scenes are written in which a little tot is featured that are not sickly sentimental, sloppy and implausible. The dialogue that can issue from a juvenile mind must be juvenile or else seem incredible. But how audiences react to it. They have reverted right back to where they were some time back. The critics, however, are hard boiled about stage and film children and even more so at the vehicles in which they appear.

Davey Lee in "The Singing Fool;" Vondell Darr in "On Trial" and Jack Hanlon in "The Shakedown" might be cited as pleasing exceptions who

drew forth much praise from the reviewers.

If only the little players were shown with the faults of youngsters all would be well, but they are made cloyingly sweet or "just too cute for words." The children would probably be happy if they were given pranks to play instead of idiotic drivels, but the grown-up writers can only remember the words of the bible that one must be as a little child to enter the kingdom of heaven—so the tots are given biblical qualities instead of real. All writers should be made to read the Booth Tarkington stories of youth and even the New York critics might attend a child star's picture without grinding of teeth.—*ANABEL LANE.*

\* \* \*

### Universal Gets San Francisco House

San Francisco.—William B. Wagon has leased the Cameo to Universal at a rental involving \$315,000 and covering a period of seven years. Wagon will continue to operate the Embassy as well as his new house which he expects to open April 1.

\* \* \*

### In Vaudeville

Wanda Hawley is "breaking in" a new vaudeville act with Billy West, called "Sharing Honors," a comedy in "one" by Andy Rice.

They are playing two weeks in small towns around here prior to going on the Orpheum Circuit.

\* \* \*

### Loraine In Chase Feature

Harry Loraine has been signed for the Charlie Chase feature, now being made at Universal.

## Vitavox Is New Sound Device

Walter Tilford, formerly owner of the Tilford studios in New York and Miami, Fla., is general manager of the new Vitavox company which has offices at Tec-Art studios, 5360 Melrose Ave., Hollywood. Tilford makes his re-entry to the film business with this new sound-on-the-film device.

Many prominent business men and financiers are in Vitavox, among them, Lyman J. Gage, Charles S. Jones, J. A. Miller, formerly of Western Electric, E. A. Broomfield, president of Barnsdall Oil Co.; F. E. Lockhard, vice president of Rio Grande Oil Co.; William Fioretine, capitalist. The company is amply financed, owns its own factories and will be ready to start actual studio sound work within three weeks.

## Witmark Plans Chain of 38 Music Branches

Edwin Morris will establish immediately 38 branch offices from Coast to Coast for M. Witmark & Sons, music publishers, as a result of the firm's recent affiliation with Warner Bros. Morris already has left new York to launch the chain.

\* \* \*

### "The Flying Fool"

Hugh Cummings is writing in collaboration with Elliott Clawson the script for "The Flying Fool." Tay Garnett will direct.

Lyman J. Gage, president of Vitavox, is also president of the Precision Electrical Machine Company, where all studio and theatre equipment will be manufactured at his factory, 1018 Sante Fe Street, Los Angeles.

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## Film Players More Humble Since "Talkies"

The decision of the judge in the case of Jetta Goudal vs. Cecil DeMille, to the effect that players may be allowed latitude in temperament because of their profession, could start havoc amongst film players. An actor or actress needs little encouragement to act temperamental, and if he or she feels the court would uphold their actions, pandemonium could soon reign. The decision might have had more effect on the film colony if a battle for livelihood were not going on between stage and screen stars with the picture players worried about their future activities.

Regarding Jetta Goudal, Jesse Lasky had openly declared she was difficult to handle. And it was no secret that the actress was not a docile lamb. If DeMille signed her knowing her reputation, the responsibility was his and he could not claim ignorance.

In most instances it is problematical how a star will act around a studio as sudden success may make a screen player unbearable. If many of them thought their outbursts and holding up of a picture would be excused legally, life at the celluloid factories would be similar to that in Mexico.

It is true that artistic people are emotional and they should be humored more than workers who are phlegmatic. That they have more control over themselves than is believed, however, can be shown by the fact that the same actors or actresses who develop great temperament when they make an outstanding hit, were almost humble when they were struggling for recognition.

The producers may be thankful that the court's decision came at this particular time, as motion picture thespians are more humble than they have been since the industry started to flourish and until conditions are adjusted, which will be some time yet, the same meek attitude will continue. While temperament is desirable in

players, an ungovernable disposition and brainstorms that cost the company extra money should not come under the heading of temperament, but insanity.

—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

### "Drag" Next for

#### Barthelmess

Richard Barthelmess' first starring vehicle under his new contract with First National-Vitaphone pictures will be "Drag," the well known novel by William Dudley Pelley.

The screen adaptation of this best seller has just been completed by Bradley King, and production work will start soon at the First National studios.

Frank Lloyd, who directed Barthelmess' first talking and singing picture, "Weary River," will again be at the megaphone.

\* \* \*

### Pola Negri with UFA

Berlin. — Pola Negri will make a picture for Ufa. Her German vehicle, tentatively titled, "Golden Moth," will be directed by Paul Czinner.

\* \* \*

### In "Drag"

Lucien Littlefield has been assigned an important role in "Drag," Richard Barthelmess' latest F. N. film.

## Films Released In Two Versions

Majority of Pathe feature releases will be made available for both silent and sound markets. Commencing with "King of Kings," two versions of features have been offered, including: "Captain Swagger," "Show Folks," "Sal of Singapore," "Marked Money," "Annapolis," "Ned McCobb's Daughter," "The Spieler," "Shady Lady," "Geraldine," "Noisy Neighbors," and "Office Scandal."

Forthcoming releases having sound and silent editions are: "The Leatherneck," "Square Shoulders," "Godless Girl" and "Strange Cargo."

\* \* \*

### First National Buys

#### "Footlights and Fools"

First National has bought filming and talking picture rights for "Footlights and Fools," Katherine Brush's College Humor story, as a starring vehicle for Colleen Moore, to follow "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling." William Seiter probably will direct.

\* \* \*

### Cooper Finishes Second

Jack Cooper, the Mack Sennett star, has just completed the second picture since his return to the Sennett fold. Production is expected to commence on the third picture in the near future.

## 1,456 Wired

Western Electric has wired 1,456 theatres in the United States for sound projection by the dual system of film and disc as of March 9.

\* \* \*

### On Sales Tour

#### For "Linda" Film

Cliff Broughton of the production company that bears his name, and Willis Kent, general sales manager, are making a flying trip through the Pacific Northwest arranging for the distribution of "Linda," a Mrs. Wallace Reid production, in that territory. The two executives left for San Francisco by motor Tuesday and will sail for Portland following a visit of a couple of days in the Bay City.

It is a sound picture, and has a theme song which was specially written for it by Irving Berlin.

\* \* \*

### Roland Brown

#### Sells Original

Wm. Fox Corp. has purchased an original story, "All Velvet," written by Roland Brown. Same will be produced as a starring vehicle for Victor McLaglen.

\* \* \*

### Green Writes Theme Song

George Green has written the theme song for "The Flying Fool," which Tay Garnett will direct.

**"One of the dialogue sequences in *'The Younger Generation'* proved an absolute show stopper."**

**—Los Angeles Times.**

# HOWARD J. GREEN

**dialogue**

EDWARD SMALL COMPANY

## England Still Worried Over Films

London.—The home brigade of picture makers begin to feel more and more as though they occupied the center of a circle of enemies all bent upon the sole mission of putting the quietus on Britain's film production aspirations. Britain would like to inaugurate a general offensive against all these competitors, but she cannot mobilize the public behind her and has not the properly drilled forces to attack with any chance of success.

This week Britain has ignored, to some extent, the American invasion. True, she gasps at the amount of money that continues to pour into the box offices where Al Jolson in "The Singing Fool" is packing theatres, but she glares at Germany and Russia at the moment.

At Germany because the Ufa studios are making a film—"The Girl in the Moon"—which they unhesitatingly called "Kolossal" and in so doing they let it be known that German thoroughness, plus the American lavishness, is going to make this latest film work of Fritz Lang, whose "Metropolis" set London talking and caused H. G. Wells to write a lengthy article calling it "the silliest film he had ever seen," a super-super film. German thoroughness has greatly impressed London film critics and they vainly search for the causes that keep Britain lagging so far behind the procession.

It is pointed out in connection with the making of "The Girl in the Moon" that German thoroughness has been carried out to such an extent that a Professor of Astronomy has been engaged in order that no expert could question the exactness of the lunar landscape. A great quantity of special sand has been brought to Berlin and baked or roasted in order to give the exact shade supposed to exist on the moon.

The actors are to be clothed with raiment specially weighted to accord with the believed specific gravity applicable to that satellite. Nothing is to be left undone to make this Ufa's greatest production. So Britain is asking, "Why can't we

do this?" and the answer seems to be that Britain is willing to slur over her difficulties of production rather than surmount them; to omit that which presents a difficult problem; in short, to take the road of least resistance and let the discriminating public go hang. Since the public does not want to go hang—but to a good motion picture—there is continued criticism of British film efforts.

The arrival in London, a week ago, of M. Pudovkin, the Russian director, created a sort of civil war in the British film colony—for one side wanted to throw him out and the other wished to welcome him with extended arms. One critic hails the artistic merit of Russian productions and the next calls the work of Soviet film producers "screen hysteria," and takes the viewpoint that these applauding flatterers of M. Pudovkin are, in all essentials, Bolsheviks.

The real truth of the matter is that the old slogan "Made in England" has ceased to carry the conviction to English minds that such a label implies superiority where pictures are concerned. The film makers blame the critics and the public and these in turn blame the producers for being penurious and point out emphatically that so long as British film makers try to please the public with £10,000 pictures instead of £50,000 productions—which, they say, is a mere bagatelle to American producers and not particularly impressive to the Germans—they fail.

Britain, however, is promising something really fine. The Gaumont Film Company will shortly begin work on a production in their Shepherd's Bush studio. This is to be a dip into the future, a peep at London twenty-five years hence, mixed up with a dramatic story of checkmating another world war. Of course there will be a lot of new wrinkles in this future London. We are promised a wonderful new Charing Cross Bridge, the completion of the much-talked-of Channel tunnel, airplanes will be wing-

## M-G-M Get Portable

A portable automotive recording apparatus, was delivered to M-G-M Eastern studio by Electrical Research Corp. The new device permits sound filming of outdoor sequences and will be used for shooting atmospheric scenes in New York as well as for short subjects.

ing about more promiscuously than they were in "Metropolis," double-decked streets will have solved the traffic problem and moving sidewalks may be introduced.

But this picture of the London of the future is still in the egg, and so the boosters for British films are turning their praise to "The Lost Patrol," which has hatched but not yet been publicly presented. This picture whose future in the States has not yet been decided but will most probably make the trip and may, Britain hopes, be a success, is pronounced as a "British triumph."

—F. L. Minnigerode in the *New York Times*.

## Screen Artists

### Act As Jurors

In the jury scene in the Tiffany-Stahl production tentatively titled "The Midway," starring Joe E. Brown and being directed by Albert Ray, there are twelve persons who at some time or other in their screen careers have played leading roles in well known productions. The jury box contains such prominent players as Mabel Julienne Scott, Joan Standing, Tony Merlo, Clarence Burton, Cal Carter, Harry Schultz, Florence Midgley, Jed Prouty, Clinton Lyle, Norbert Miles, Walter Perrin and the star of the production, Joe E. Brown.

\* \* \*

### In Hecht Film

Boris Karloff, famous on the stage for his work in "Kongo" and on the screen for his roles in "The Greater Glory," "Two Arabian Nights," and others, has been added to the cast of Ben Hecht's "The Green Ghost," being filmed as an all talking mystery drama at the M-G-M studios.

sig schlager

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that

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will be available

about May 11



# We Predicted

That

*Showboat*

*Broadway &*

*The Minstrel Man*

would be the three outstanding pictures of the year

*Showboat*

has been completed, wonderfully directed by Harry Pollard. The verdict of the Society Premiere at Miami and Palm Beach will be the verdict of the world.

In SHOWBOAT Carl Laemmle has the greatest talking and singing picture ever made.

Of course we had something to do with it, or we wouldn't be paying for this ad.

No. 2 is BROADWAY.

Prepare to rave over Carl Laemmle, Jr's production of this greatest of all Broadway stories.

Then ask us how we can possibly top these two with THE MINSTREL MAN? But—we're doing it!

EDWARD J. MONTAGNE,  
*Editor-in-Chief, Universal Pictures.*

## Designing Sets According to Line and Color

By GLEN GANO

We frequently hear the word pictorial composition mentioned, and without it, the highest class of art cannot be depicted upon the screen, therefore, it is very essential, but as a rule, pictorial composition and beautiful photography, alone, will not carry the picture. Let us say that when a beautiful line is viewed or done in combination with color, we see or feel it either with ease or great difficulty, according to proper or improper rendering. These two terms "ease" and "difficulty" are used to tell how lines impress the mental mirror through the medium of the eye.

One of the principle reasons why the beautiful line is seen with much ease is probably because any single part of a line has a corresponding relation to another portion of the same line. For instance, if they are curved lines, from the upper part of the screen to the lower, they are so similar in gradation that they cause a smoothness of vision. This is one of the places in the cinema where the term balance may fit in. In the case of an ugly line, there is no smoothness of vision in which to guide the continuity for the eye-work.

There are some kinds of balance or repetition that can be obtained, and in this case ugly lines may be considered a certain kind of beauty, or at least interesting to look at when considered as such, because each situation is a single one taken by itself. In other words, a certain line may not be pleasing when taken alone, but if considered in relation to another similar line symmetrically arranged, it may be pleasing to the eye.

To aggregate this it is obvious that line and color go

hand in hand to make the color cinema a success, and the balancing of these two make the rhythmic balance of motion which the camera depicts, and gives to the particular scene or occasion the correct impressions of the required mood in the same manner that music is arranged to impress the ear by sound.

Sometimes, if the line is made less rigid, it helps to make the color more impressive rather than just filling in the space with color. Did you ever stop to think that of all the arts today, the cinema is the only one that can be compared with music? A motion picture, we usually see only once, and music we hear a popular piece many times and become so accustomed to it, that we begin to enjoy it more and more, all the time, until something else comes along that strikes the fancy, and takes it place, and even then if we hear an old piece again that we have not heard for years, we may enjoy it because there was something about it that left an impression upon our faculty of hearing.

(Continued next week)

\* \* \*

### In M-G-M Film

Carmencita Johnson, child actress in "The Wind," has been added to the cast of Clarence Brown's "Wonder of Women" at the M-G-M studios. She plays the daughter of Peggy Wood, heroine of the story.

\* \* \*

### Brooks Writes Lines

George Brooks, co-author of "Spread Eagle," New York stage hit of last season and now a Fox-Movietone writer, is preparing the dialogue for Raoul Walsh's forthcoming production, "The Cock-Eyed World."

## DuPont to Market 2 New Types of Stock

DuPont-Pathe has developed two specialized sound recording negatives, to be known as "V. D." and "V. A.," former to be utilized for variable density recording, and "V. A." for variable area recording. Laboratory technicians have been at work many months determining correct types of stock for sound production, embodying characteristics desired both by recording engineers and laboratory technicians.

\* \* \*

## Technicolor Executives Arrive In Hollywood

Judge William Travers Jerome, well known to everybody as former District Attorney of New York City, and Mr. A. W. Erickson, widely known through his industrial and market activities in the East, arrived in Hollywood on the Golden State. Both these gentlemen are members of the Executive Committee of the Technicolor Motion Picture Corp.

\* \* \*

## Monte Brice Signed

Monte Brice has been signed as producer of short subjects by Pathe. Mr. Brice's first series will be Hugh Wiley's "Wild Oat" stories.

## \$2,102,033 Net For Loews, Inc.

Net of \$2,102,033 for the 12 weeks ended Nov. 18, 1928, is reported by Loew's, which recently passed to control of Fox. Operating profit for the period is listed at \$2,997,276 and depreciation and taxes at \$895,243.

\* \* \*

## Sell Interest in Canadian Corp.

Paramount has disposed of "a substantial interest" in Famous Players Canadian Corp., according to a formal statement issued yesterday by Adolph Zukor. The holdings were bought by various unnamed Canadian interests, but understood to be the group until now holding control.

There will be no changes in management, Zukor continuing as president of the Canadian chain, which operates 140 theatres.

\* \* \*

## Complete Contract

W. Scott Darling has completed his contract with the Fox organization as a playwright scenarist, his last assignment being the screen version of "The Scent of Sweet Almonds."

## HARRISON WILEY

### ART DIRECTOR

"Columbia Pictures"

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# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

**"THE WOMAN WHO NEEDED KILLING,"** a Paramount picture.

Scenario by Margery Lawrence and John Farrow.

Directed by Rowland V. Lee.

Cast: Baclanova, Clive Brook and Neil Hamilton.

A Preview.

## Critical Viewpoint:

This, Baclanova's first starring vehicle, is an all-talkie. It does not seem to be a subject that is apt to prove generally popular with theatregoers. It is a sombre, tragic tale, dealing with a woman of nymphomaniatic tendencies.

During the preview showing at Bard's West Adams, the audience treated the picture with a great deal of amusement and insisted on laughing and tittering at the tense, dramatic situations. They were entirely out of sympathy with the character played by Baclanova. This may be remedied to a certain extent by a little re-editing, but it seems doubtful that it can be totally eliminated.

The story itself runs along smoothly, but never hits any dramatic heights. The climax, which is the death of Baclanova, caused by the bite of a poisonous snake, was a very difficult one to handle. Because of its very nature, it was impossible to show the incident on the screen. The situation was very well done, considering the difficulty, but it lacked punch.

In favor of the film it might be said that it is at least an attempt to do something different, but this fact will probably be given little consideration by the average theatregoer.

Baclanova's work is satisfactory, but under the handicap of a role that is both unconvincing and unsympathetic the actress will not score her usual success with either critics or public. Neither does she seem to be, as the role is presented, the type of woman over whom so many men would be attracted to. Her delivery of lines is impressive but pictorially she does not appear to be stellar timber.

Clive Brook and Neil Hamilton contribute their usual able portrayals. Clyde Cook is good

in a supporting role.

## Box Office Angle:

This production carries a powerful title that should help much in luring patrons to the theatre. The majority, however, will be disappointed. Exhibitors should look this one over before booking.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

## DeMond Writing

### Dialogues for "U"

Dialogues for "His Lucky Day," Reginald Denny's latest Universal starring vehicle, are being written by Albert DeMond.

\* \* \*

## Bushell Signs with Lasky

Anthony Bushell, selected for the lead opposite Jeanne Eagels in "Jealousy," has signed a long term contract.

\* \* \*

## Powers Cinephone

### Gets George Craff

New York. — George Lewis Craff, formerly engineer with the Victor company at Camden, New Jersey, has joined Powers Cinephone and will serve in an advisory capacity on all sound productions, using the Powers system.

With the Victor company he was identified with the scoring of "Wings," "Lilac Time," "Redskin" and "Abie's Irish Rose."

\* \* \*

## U. A. In New

### German Film Deal

Berlin. — Terra and United Artists are about to close a deal calling for production in Germany. United, having distributed no German pictures last year, finds itself without a single "kontingent" for the new season. This is the primary purpose of the Terra transaction which will permit continuance of U. A. distribution in this market.

**"THIS IS HEAVEN,"** a Sam Goldwyn picture.

Directed by Al Santell.

Scenario by Hope Loring.

Cast: Vilma Banky, James Hall, Fritzi Ridgeway, Lucien Littlefield and Virginia Sales.

A Preview.

## Critical Viewpoint:

Sam Goldwyn has apparently tried to follow up on the "My Best Girl" formula used by Mary Pickford, but with rather unsatisfactory results. "This Is Heaven" was originally titled "Childs, Fifth Avenue."

Vilma is shown as an immigrant girl who secures a position as pancake tosser in a Fifth Avenue restaurant. She meets a wealthy boy but mistakes him for a chauffeur. Then follow the usual developments that mark a story of this nature. It is a very light offering but contains an underlying human note which saves the picture from complete mediocrity.

"This Is Heaven" still requires a great deal of work before it will be ready for final showing. The film is draggy from beginning to end, at times becoming so boring that it has a somniferous effect upon the spectator.

There is much repetition of incident in several of the episodes. This is not only unnecessary, but it slows up the action to the extent that the audience loses interest in the story, which carries little enough suspense as it is.

The redeeming feature of the picture is the quaintness and charm of Miss Banky's speaking voice as revealed in the two or three brief talking sequences in the film. The production also offers the star a more lively role than those in which she has appeared heretofore. Vilma

seems to have a flare for light comedy that will come as a surprise to those who have been viewing her in stiff, dressed-up roles since her arrival in America. She does a particularly clever bit at the opening of the picture, when she is shown as a bewildered immigrant who has just arrived at Ellis Island.

Apart from these items the production is far from a noteworthy one and not up to what has been anticipated.

## Box Office Angle:

Vilma Banky in a comedy role is the best selling point for this production. The star is very appealing and might have scored a distinct hit if better material had been prepared. As it stands, "This is Heaven," by virtue of its heart interest qualities and the popularity of its star, will no doubt prove sufficiently amusing to overcome serious complaint from most picture fans.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

## Plan "Russian Rhapsody"

"Russian Rhapsody" has been tentatively decided upon as the first musical production for Fox Movietone, to be done by DeSylva, Brown and Henderson.

\* \* \*

## Beatrice Van Joins

### First National

Beatrice Van has been signed by First National to write the dialogues for "No, No Nannette." Miss Van just finished a scenario assignment for Universal.

## DONN HAYES

### FILM EDITOR

### Editing Sound Pictures

### Now Editing for Tiffany-Stahl

## "THE MIDWAY"

# *I'm Doing Quite Well, Thank You!*

**"Cohens and Kellys In Atlantic City"**

*(My First Talkie)*

Playing the Pantages this Week

§ § §

**Three Other Original Stories  
So Far This Year!**

§ § §

*Now In Production:*

**"Father and Son," Columbia (Special) Talkie**

with Jack Holt, directed by Erle Kenton

§ § §

**"The Batchelor Girl," Columbia Talkie**

William Collier, Jr. and Jacqueline Logan

Directed by Richard Thorpe

§ § §

*In Preparation:*

**"The Love Captive," Columbia**

# **JACK TOWNLEY**

*(I Write Dialogue, Too)*

*Management*

**LICHTIG & ENGLANDER**



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# THE FILM MERCURY

**VERITAS VINCIT**Vol. 9, No. 19  
Sixteen PagesHOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA  
FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 1929Edited by  
TAMAR LANE

## Warners To Quit Company And Form New Concern, Report

### note on a young director

For ten years I have awaited this day. I have never attempted to exploit the halt, the lame and the blind—the “duds” so eager to keep a foothold in an industry which should have cast them aside long ago.

During a period when it was far easier to promote “dried-in-the-bone” mediocrities, I chose to accept the challenge of the self-styled progressive producer who actually remained “safe,” sane—and stationary! Yet, *even then*, I successfully brought to the attention of the industry many able, aspiring and brilliant creative workers.

Today the task is easier. For we now are part of an industry at last authentically eager for the fresh young blood of progress. To this industry I am presenting a young director.

My enthusiasm for him is based upon his extraordinarily rich background . . . his rapidly developed abilities during his apprenticeship . . . and the added confidence given me by the favorable opinion of certain executives who have come in practical contact with him. He deserves the earnest attention of every constructive producer who is looking well ahead in this new era of the motion picture.

sig schlager.

### Fox M-G-M Deal Makes Enemies

### United Artists In Queer Moves

### Nothing But Silence From Mr. Kennedy

### The Mysterious Mr. Zukor

**REVIEWS**

**ANABEL LANE***Says*

It seems to me that Jane La Verne, who plays the child in "The Show Boat," is quite the most wonderful child I have seen in a motion picture for years. If this film were not so fine and other parts so much larger, this tot would be a sensation. It is when she plays Laura La Plante as a child that she is so fine. Her spontaneity, naturalness and one look of hate she gives her mother are remarkable. In the second part of the picture she is given nothing to do but cry—but at the opening I felt like cheering for her.

While on the subject of "The Show Boat," Joseph Schildkraut should be mentioned. After his success in this film, Schildkraut could be made a big attraction. With discernment used in his stories, Schildkraut has fine possibilities.

That excellent actor Jean Hersholt is going to leave Universal. Let us hope that the future sees him cast in roles that permit him to show his exceptional ability. Emil Jannings and Jean Hersholt are the two best character actors on the screen. Hersholt's performance in "Greed" and "Stella Dallas" shows what he can do. I could never understand why he was cast in sweet old men roles—when he showed such virility of manner in these two photoplays.

Frances Agnew is one scenario and title writer who has made the change from silent to talking pictures with marked success, in that she has two rumored hits to her credit, shortly to be released. "Syncope," which she adapted in New York for RKO, follows "Speakeasy" at the Criterion here and opens simultaneously in New York, while "The Rainbow Man," starring Eddie Dowling, is set for a two-a-day run at the Selwyn Theatre, New York, beginning with a top price premiere.

**Invents New  
Sound Device**

Norman Goldstein, popular projectionist of Fox Adams Theatre, has an invention that is expected to revolutionize the reproduction problem in the theatres, both disc and "sound on film" in the very near future. One of the principle features of this new device known as the "Normalizer" is that it can synchronize perfectly with the characters on the screen, instead of having to synchronize the lip movement with the record, in other words, if the film loses or gains 25 feet, the machine catches up with it, in five seconds, and no one can tell the change, or if the film breaks it does not make any difference. These machines can be installed in one half hour in any theatre. Some other features are: no batteries, using alternating current, no distortion, and can be used with any projection machine.

Conceded by experts as being far in advance of any appliances now in use, the first three units are now in course of manufacture, and many offers are being made for the patents. There is little doubt that more will be heard of this clever invention before long, and West Adams District is to be the distributing point, an office having been established at 2618 Mesa Drive.

\* \* \*

**Completes First  
American Picture**

Berthold Viertel's initial directorial effort for Fox Films in America, "The One Woman Idea," featuring Rod La Rocque, is nearly completed. This is a story with a Parisian setting and credit for the scenario goes to Marion Orth, who has functioned in a like capacity on a number of Fox Films feature successes.

As I read my column I am surprised what a little Pollyanna I am this week. I do not know if it is Spring—or Easter with its peace on earth good will to men. I seem to have all the sweetness of a motion picture heroine — but there are other weeks to follow.

**Nothing But Silence  
From Mr. Kennedy**

The prolonged silence from the vicinity of Joseph P. Kennedy is beginning to arouse wonderment in the film colony as to what the young man from Boston is now up to. He hasn't announced a merger in almost four weeks.

Inside reports from the East state that Kennedy is now working with J. J. Murdock on a new vaudeville circuit to span the country. What they are going to do with a new vaude circuit after they get it is a question that will take some answering. There seem to be more than enough variety theatres in the country at the present time and most of them are showing small profit. Even the last financial report of the Keith-Orpheum circuit was far from bright.

Kennedy and Murdock recently arrived in New York after a visit to the West Coast.

E. B. Derr, Kennedy man; Ed Moore, his personal assistant; Tom Gorman and Pat Casey, Kennedy-Murdock men, arrived earlier. Others are also gathered in the East, including C. S. (Tink) Humphries, whom Kennedy and Murdock made head of the Family Time booking department of RKO last summer.

Humphries is reported having looked over the ground here in the interests of Kennedy and Murdock during their absence in the West. John Royal who has just resigned as RKO district head, is expected in New York this week. He is a son-in-law of Murdock's and is expected to be aligned with the circuit being promoted.

Billy Jackson, Murdock man, who has long been an RKO agent and vaudeville man in Chicago, is in the East also.

With Kennedy and Murdock cloaking their activities with utmost secrecy, official information concerning their progress with a vaudeville circuit is meager.

Recently the K-M group had approximately 125 theatres tentatively lined up in the pool that would form their circuit,

these including among other chains and individual properties the Proctor Circuit, the Interstate houses, Wilmer & Vincent chain.

In some quarters it is believed that Kennedy and Murdock plan to build up a theatre circuit which will become such a menace to the Keith-Orpheum chain that the RKO magnates will buy them out to get rid of them. On the other hand the whole affair might turn into another proposition whereby a large issue of stock would be floated and passed on to the public at a huge profit. Kennedy and Murdock could then step out and look for new fields to conquer.

\* \* \*

**Soviet Planning 130****Films for Next Year**

One hundred thirty films are to be made by the Soviet during the coming year, according to Constantine Schwetchikoff, director of the Soviet industry, who is here for a study of the export of the pictures. Fifty of the pictures will be exported to European countries and 15 of the number are scheduled to be sent to the United States.

\* \* \*

**Several Talkie Outfits****In Tec-Art Studios**

The Vitovox talking pictures, a sound-on-film system; Cinephone, Powers, on-the-film system; Qualitone and a Western Electric outfit are all located now on the Tec-Art studio lot where they will record for film producers, it is said. Tec-Art have also built a sound stage for independents.

\* \* \*

**Harry Warner Predicts****Earnings of \$18,000,000**

"Warner Bros. should show net of \$18,000,000 to \$20,000,000, before interest, taxes, amortization and depreciation, for fiscal year ending August 31, 1929," according to Harry M. Warner, who predicted, before sailing on a European trip, that current year's earnings would top previous year's by more than \$8,000,000.



## Nine New Films On World Wide List

Nine imported photoplays are announced in the second list of pictures ready for release in April and May by World Wide Pictures.

With the all-talking picture "Black Waters," also to be released in April, and the six pictures released in Jan., World Wide is now offering sixteen European pictures to exhibitors, about one third of the total number the company expects to import during the year.

As in all previous releases all of the pictures were made where the stories are laid, and the places covered are London, Henley, Scotland, Paris, Deauville, Vienna and Berlin.

In the list is an outstanding picture directed by E. A. Dupont, two with American stars and there are silent pictures, with synchronization and those with part dialogue as well as an all-talking production.

The new releases are:

"Piccadilly," "Kitty," "The Woman in White," "Week-End Wives," "The Prince and the Dancer," "The Whirl of Life," "The Doctors Women," "Berlin After Dark," "The Apaches of Paris."

\* \* \*

### Hersholt Gets

#### New Contract Offer

Even though Jean Hersholt has not completed his last assignment with Universal—the starring male role in "The Climax"—it is reported on reliable authority that he is about to affix his signature to a long term contract with one of the most prominent producing organizations.

\* \* \*

### Eisenstein Not

#### Coming to America

Projected trip to America of S. M. Eisenstein, Russian director, responsible for "Potemkin" and "Ten Days That Shook the World," will not materialize, according to information received by the Film Guild Cinema.

\* \* \*

### To Direct for Pathe

Richard Bobslavsky will direct Ina Claire in her first Pathe audifilm.

# Does Adolph Zukor Control The Warner Organization?

Is Adolph Zukor the real power behind the Warner-First National organization? Far-fetched as this may seem, many in film circles are convinced that Zukor is the real guiding hand that pulls the strings in Warner-First National affairs.

The suspicion that the Paramount chief was the actual but silent boss of the Vitaphone outfit was first whispered about at the time Warner Bros. stock took a boom on Wall St. During the past few weeks this theory has taken a new hold and is being advanced with renewed vigor, particularly in and about Broadway. One member of the press goes so far as to infer that the Warners are taking orders direct from Zukor's Paramount office and in substantiation of his claim it is asserted that the Warner Bros. have spent much time in conference with Zukor and other Paramount officials during the past few months.

It is contended that Zukor would have bought the Warner concern in open market at the time the Vitaphone features first began to attract attention had not the government been keeping a watchful eye on Paramount affairs. Fearing to make an open purchase of Warner Bros., Zukor, according to the theory advanced, bought control through banking interests, and then ceased to worry whether the talkies took hold with the public or not.

Those who hold to this contention point out that Zukor has at no time displayed any concern over Warner Bros., activities or the progress of the talkies, which they assert is an indication that the Paramount chief felt secure in the knowledge that the Warner outfit was just another egg in his basket and he would profit no matter which way the eggs hatched.

Any theory that Zukor controls the Warner-First National organization must be based on either one of two assumptions.

1. That the Warner Bros.

are unaware of the fact and are under the impression that control of their company has merely passed into the hands of some bankers.

The latter assumption is the one held by most film sharpshooters, who claim that Zukor would not take even the Warner Bros. into his confidence if he were going to buy into the company. This, however, would not explain the many asserted conferences that have been held between the Warners and Paramount officials.

While it is true that throughout his film career Zukor has shown a tendency to take on new holdings of almost every variety, there have been very few outward indications that would lead one to the belief that he at present wields any power in Warner affairs. Rather the Warners seem to be running their own affairs down to the last detail, which would not be the case, in the opinion of many, if Zukor were actually in control of the company.

Zukor has played such a prominent part in so many different film deals that the industry is prone to see the secret manouvers of Zukor in almost every transaction which occurs. The one thing that makes it appear as though there might be logical grounds for the belief that the Paramount chief is in some way interested in Warner affairs is the fact that up to the present time he seems to have taken no steps to halt the advancement of Warner Bros. power. To the contrary, Zukor seems to be on an unusually friendly basis with the Warners, which probably would not be the case if he felt that the Warners were in any way a menace to Paramount supremacy.

When one considers the remarkable progress that the Warner Bros. have made in the past two years, rising from a small independent company up to the point where they are now

one of the most dominant concerns in the industry, it does not seem unlikely that Zukor would endeavor to get in on some of the big profits that the Warners are earning. Rather, it would indicate a blunder on Zukor's part if he failed to get in on the Warner bandwagon. And Zukor is not in the habit of making blunders.

\* \* \*

### Will Rogers Signed

Fox has signed a two year contract with Will Rogers to appear in Movietone features. The nationally-known humorist is now appearing in "Three Cheers" on Broadway and, following its closing in a few weeks, will leave for the Coast to start work for Fox.

\* \* \*

### New Title

"The Idle Rich" is the final title of M-G-M's all talking filmization of "White Collars," well known stage play. It was directed by William C. De Mille, with Conrad Nagel, Bessie Love, Leila Hyams, Robert Ober and others of note in the cast.

\* \* \*

### Halsey, Stuart Financing

#### Fox Theatre Deals

Financing of Fox-Metropolitan Playhouses, wholly-owned subsidiary of Fox Theatres Corp., is to be handled by Halsey, Stuart & Co. The company soon will acquire title to between 175 and 200 houses in Greater New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

\* \* \*

### Bobby Burns Signs

#### Contract with Fox

Bobby Burns, formerly with Earl Carroll's "Vanities," and who has been in Keith vaudeville, has been signed to a five-year contract as featured player by Fox.

\* \* \*

### Lily Damita In

#### Walsh Production

Lily Damita, French actress, will play the feminine lead in Raoul Walsh's next Fox picture, "The Cockeyed World."



## Queer Moves of United Artists Puzzle Film Industry

There is considerable conflict of opinion in film circles in regard to what Joe Schenck really intends to do with United Artists.

While Schenck has officially announced that the Warners are expected to buy a large, but minority, interest in United Artists, reports from reliable quarters say that RKO is also concerned in the purchase of the U. A. organization.

The Film Mercury was informed by one important film executive that the RKO-United Artists deal is already in the basket and that only a few details are still to be worked out before official announcement is made. Whether this is true or not remains to be seen but there are good grounds for the belief that Joseph M. Schenck has new developments of some kind up his sleeve.

Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, Gloria Swanson and the other stars and producers who make up the United Artists organization would probably welcome a deal with RKO, providing the terms were attractive. The United Artists group are reported as having had all they want of running their own affairs and would be glad to shift the burden to some one else for a change. With the radio crowd anxious to get control of as many big firms as possible, this appears to be the right moment to put through a sale for United Artists.

Charlie Chaplin is the only star who is reported as against the United Artists merger.

Another inconsistent development in United Artists affairs came this week with the announcement that the Publix-Paramount outfit had bought a half interest in United Artists theatre holdings throughout the country and in future these houses will be operated under Publix management.

This is a peculiar transaction in view of the fact that the Warners, who are expected to buy an interest in United Artists, are anxious to get theatres for themselves. If the War-

ners are actually going to invest the sum of \$20,000,000 in United Artists, why were the U. A. theatres not reserved for the Warner Bros. instead of turning them over to Paramount just prior to drawing the Warners into the U. A. fold?

It might have been advantageous for the Warners to invest money in United Artists in order to control bookings in U. A. theatres but with these theatres now in the hands of the Paramount-Publix chain there seems to be little reason for Warners sinking money into U. A. stock. A possible explanation of this turning of the U. A. theatres over to Publix in the face of a big deal with Warners is, as outlined in another article in this week's Film Mercury, the Warner Bros. organization is under the domination of Adolph Zukor and it doesn't matter into whose hands the U. A. theatres fall.

It is now generally accepted that a Paramount-RKO amalgamation is inevitable if the radio-electric interests hope to become dominant factors in the film industry. It is not believed that the radio magnates will stop at a deal which would merely call for Publix operation of RKO theatres. While such a deal might be put thru as a starter, a complete merger of interests will eventually take place, according to most observers.

\* \* \*

### To Join Universal

#### Scenario Staff

W. Scott Darling, who recently completed his contract with the Fox studios, has been confined to his home suffering from a severe cold. Darling, it is understood, is shortly to join Universal's scenario staff.

\* \* \*

### Buys "Pointed Heels"

"Pointed Heels," by Charles Brackett, has been purchased by Paramount. Mary Eaton, Ziegfeld player, will be featured. Ludwig Berger will direct it in Hollywood as an all-talker and singing production.

### "The Climax" Starts At Universal City

Production of the dialogue picture "The Climax," adapted from Edward Locke's stage play of the same name which was Guy Bates Post's starring vehicle several years ago, was started this week at Universal City under the direction of Renaud Hoffman.

In the lead roles are Jean Hersholt, Kathryn Crawford, John Reinhardt and Henry Armatia, who share in the dialogue.

\* \* \*

### Smith with M-G-M

Walter Smith, formerly chief editor at the Capitol, New York, now is chief editor at the M-G-M eastern studio.

\* \* \*

### Fox Buys Jessel Contract

George Jessel's contract with Tiffany-Stahl has been bought by William Fox, who intends to make four dialogue pictures with the star of "Lucky Boy."

### Young to Enter Talkie Field

Lon Young will produce a series of feature length talkies upon completion of the silent series he is now producing and supervising for Chesterfield, according to report. He has only one more silent feature to make, having just finished "Below the Deadline," seventh of the series.

Young has earned the reputation in the film colony of being one of the most efficient and successful producers in the independent field. He personally supervises every picture from the preparation of the story to the final editing and has attracted much attention locally by his capable production methods.

Young has received offers to produce for two other distributing organizations, but it is understood that he will continue with Chesterfield.



**Watch!**

**HANS JOBY**

As

**Peter Padich**

the character lead in "Prince of Hearts," by John Reinhardt, with Norman Kerry, Barbara Worth, George Fawcett, John Reinhardt. Directed by Cliff Wheeler.



PATHE'S DIALOGUE

Production

*The*  
*Leatherneck*

Directed

By

HOWARD HIGGIN

# THE FILM PARADE

*As seen by* RICHARD WATTS JR.

Photoplay Editor, *New York Herald-Tribune*

Whatever may be happening to the much-confused cinema these days, what with the eminent Mr. Winfield Sheehan and the other boys strenuously concerning themselves with its future, it can certainly be said that the more cultured magazines are taking it up in an ambitious way. It wasn't so long ago that the 'regulation fan publications were regarded as on the same social basis as the Liberty Boys of '76 or the adventures of Old King Brady; the trade papers were considered the equivalents of bartenders' manuals, and any paper or magazine that gave evidence of accepting the movies as anything above the level of a peep show was set down as pretty eccentric.

I will not, of course, dare to suggest that their screen critics, not to say the medium such unappreciated ladies and gentlemen are pondering, are even now accepted with the proper enthusiasm by the daily papers. It is, however, safe enough to suggest that the fan magazines are currently regarded as at least the equals of the other humorous publications of the land and that the periodicals which go in for culture are almost hysterically concerned with the problems and the people of the photoplay.

It is apologetically, rather than with any effort after snobbishness, that I confess to the infrequency with which I see that incredibly popular weekly, "The Saturday Evening Post," but anyway, a casual recent survey indicates that the paper is not entirely callous to the existence of the dramatic medium referred to by its more precious practitioners as the cinema. "Liberty," the youthful rival to Mr. Franklin's most active monument, not only possesses a vigorous screen page as a regular editorial feature, but likewise is not averse to running eulogies of

Miss Lillian Gish and other matters concerned with the progress of the photoplay. Such tributes, however, may be impressive because of circulation figures, but they are hardly as exciting to one interested in the cultural adventures of the films as are the indications of interest provided by the two publications that are currently the pride of those ladies and gentlemen who like to hear themselves described as either sophisticates or intellectuals. It is almost needless to say that I mean "The American Mercury" and "Vanity Fair."

Under the guidance of Mr. Donald Freeman, a cinema devotee, "Vanity Fair," the most debonair of the magazines, has turned into a leisurely, cultured and gently contemptuous rival of the routine fan publications. Now "The American Mercury," which, up to a reasonably short time ago, showed its opinion of the cinema by ignoring it, surprisingly develops a passionate and almost morbid preoccupation with photoplay affairs.

About two months ago it began its confession of interest in a somewhat unfortunate manner. That is, it published an attack on film critics by a lady named Leda V. Bauer. Since it has always seemed to me that a critic, who lives by denouncing others, has little reason to be annoyed when others chastize him, I beg you to accept my assurance that it was not the bitter attitude of Miss Bauer that causes me to depreciate her articles. The trouble was that her essay was so shockingly uninformed in all its details and so absurdly easy to confute by anyone who would take the trouble to do it that it seemed a shame such an incompetent piece of work should be used as the pioneer contribution of an important magazine's investigations of the screen. I suppose we should let Miss Bauer off

easily, though as not only a pioneer but also a brilliant salesman.

Fortunately the current issue of Mr. Mencken's distinguished publication more than atones for the inanities of Miss Bauer's effort. It has, for example, an enormously persuasive defense of talking pictures by Robert E. Sherwood, the first of the screen critics, which, though it may not convince you that the demise of the silent cinema is anything to cheer for is assuredly the most successful argument for the new manner that has yet been devised. As a result of it I would place Mr. Sherwood besides the makers of "The Letter" and "Hearts in Dixie" among the benefactors of film audibility.

Then there is an estimate of talking pictures by that distinguished cinema hater, Mr. George Jean Nathan. To those who happen to be taken in by Mr. Nathan's efforts to appear ferocious, it may come as a surprise to find the Peter Pan of dramatic criticism revealing an intimate knowledge of the recent activities of such diversified cinema personages as Clara Bow, Charles Farrell, Mary Duncan, Alice White, Jack Mulhall, Greta Garbo, John Gilbert, Vilma Banky and Walter Byron, all in one paragraph, as well as a reasonably accurate acquaintance with the history, the outstanding characteristics and the general audience values of the films.

If you can overlook the somewhat fatiguing petulance of Mr. Nathan's pretended contempt for the cinema, you will find much of interest in his essay. It is his argument that the films, thanks to their silence, have been able to get away with considerably more sex display than they will be able to manage when screen conversation becomes universal. He sums it up in this delicate manner: "The censors now permit any

number of things to be shown where they will refuse to permit them to be spoken of. Clara Bow is currently allowed to display her anatomy for the incandescence of sailors, to the great profit of the Messrs. Zukor and Lasky, but the moment Clara opens her mouth and says, "Come on, boys, get a load of this!" the censors will hop on her and the Messrs. Zukor and Lasky will be out money."

His suggestion is, I think, entirely logical, as his belief that "the silent movies, with very few exceptions in the last three or four years, have prospered most greatly from the display of sex garbage. The talkies, without this sex garbage, after their novelty has worn off, will have a difficult time of it. . . . You've got to give them sex or nothing." I imagine almost every thing he says is worthy of detailed consideration, but it was not the intention of this sermon to go into that. It would be more to my purposes, for the present moment, to consider the attention paid to the cinema by such publications as "The New Yorker," "Life" and "Judge." Anyway the point I would make is that the screen seems, somehow or other, to have pushed its way in upon the consciousness of the Sophisticate and his favorite papers. Maybe this is something to be optimistic over.

\* \* \*

## Attacks Crime in Films

Madison, Wis.—Stickers attacking newspapers and theatres for publication and showing of articles and plays featuring gun play, violence, crime and weak morals, have been distributed by the Common Sense Club.

\* \* \*

## German Sound

### Film for London

London.—Alpha Film Corp. will distribute the first German sound picture, "Lost Illusions." The picture, it is stated, is synchronized with sound effects.



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FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 1929

## Many Friendships Broken Over Recent Fox-Loew-M-G-M Deal

Argument and discussion is still raging in Hollywood in regard to the exact identity of the parties who cleaned up on the recent Fox-Loew deal. All kinds of accusations and denials are in the air.

On the one hand it is claimed that Louis B. Mayer had the inside on the deal and sold his holding at a fancy price without letting any of the other M-G-M executives know about it. Others assert that Mayer knew nothing of the affair and still holds his stock. One thing seems fairly certain, Irving Thalberg was not tipped off about the deal and the whole transaction came as something of a shock to him. Not only was he not given the opportunity to dispose of his stock at the attractive figure of \$120 a share, but the sale of M-G-M to Fox seriously threatened his prestige in the film colony and probably played havoc with some of his plans.

One news dispatch from the East states that Nicholas Schenck, the man who issued such forceful denials, was in reality the prime engineer of the Fox-Loew deal and mopped up several million dollars for himself by a bit of clever strategy. This report is to the effect that Nicholas Schenck quietly secured options on the holding of the entire Loew family at prices ranging from \$85 to \$105 per share and then went out and sold these holdings to Fox at the rate of \$120 a share.

This yarn, if true, might explain why Schenck was so anxious to quiet the press until he had lined the transaction up to

his satisfaction. The actual facts in regard to the Fox coup may never be known, but the whole affair is almost certain to leave many broken friendships in its wake.

\* \* \*

### Garbo to Play "Anna Christie"

With the return of Greta Garbo from Sweden, where she passed her vacation, announcement was made by M-G-M that "Anna Christie" will be her next starring vehicle and incidentally her debut in talking pictures.

Clarence Brown will direct the picture, an all talking version of the play, as soon as he finishes "Wonder of Women" in which he is now directing Lewis Stone and Peggy Wood.

In the talking picture Miss Garbo will play the role created on the stage by Pauline Lord. George Marion, who played the father in the stage play, will repeat it on the screen.

\* \* \*

### Frank Holland Jr.

If this comes to the attention of Frank Holland, Jr., an actor in pictures, will he please communicate at once with an anxious father, who can be reached either direct or care of Billy Morris, 9766 Waters Avenue, Rainier Beach, Seattle, Wash.

\* \* \*

### "Show Boat" on Broadway April 16

"Show Boat" will have its Broadway premiere, April 16 in the Globe, which Universal has engaged for a term of months. Paul Whiteman and his orchestra, in person, will play as one of the features of the opening.

### U. S. Film Showings Increase in Austria

Washington. — Increase of American picture showings in Austria during 1928 is shown in the report of George R. Canty, Trade Commissioner at Paris, who states that the United States and Germany supplied 88 per cent of all films shown. The American share of the total was 240 or 47 per cent and the German 210 or 41 per cent.

\* \* \*

### On Stage and Screen

Edward Everett Horton, popular farceur of screen and stage is to be seen on both this week. At the Warner Bros. Theatre in Hollywood he may be seen and heard in the leading male role in "Sonny Boy." Down town on the Majestic stage he may be heard and seen as the Prince in "The Swan."

### West Coast Buys From Qualitone

Samuel Freedman, president of the Qualitone Corporation, has announced the signing up of the Junior West Coast Theatre Circuit for two Qualitone installations. One of the installations is to be made in the new half-million dollar theatre in Redlands, Calif., while the other is to be in the beautiful Granada Theatre at Ontario, Calif.

Incidentally, the West Coast's order of two machines brings the total number of Qualitone installations contracted for up to thirty-five.

\* \* \*

### 9,000 to 10,000

Between 9,000 and 10,000 accounts are served on the average by Paramount, Sidney Kent testified in the government's arbitration action.

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WARNER BROTHERS

*present*

“The Desert Song”

A Vitaphone Production

*Directed By*

ROY DEL RUTH

*Supervision*

DARRYL FRANCIS ZANUCK

Adaptation

Written By

HARVEY H. GATES

## Luck Continues to Rule the Movies

That little old gal Luck is as elusive as the will-o'-the-wisp. And except for the famous old city of Monte Carlo, she is more in evidence in Hollywood than any other place in the world. While everyone feels indignant at luck some of the time, she is really a great balance in this money-mad business.

With the same executives, directors, stars and writers, an organization that has been turning out fine product, will start making mediocre pictures. Then, after a period of depression the company will swing back to the box-office plums. This has happened to almost every organization—the others have consistently produced bad films.

"The Jazz Singer" brought the Warner Brothers out of its bad luck. "The Desert Song" should add to the bankroll. And the first John Barrymore talking picture might pave the Sunset Boulevard studio with gold. But Warners will need to rub the rabbit's paw to make the public take to some of the program photoplays.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer must have offered great sacrifices to the Goddess for she seems to have greatly favored this concern. For after two years of mostly rubbish, M-G-M has again come to the foreground.

The mention of United Artists used to give me heartburn, but its mascot must have brought luck, as a succession of noteworthy cinemas are about to be released.

But what has happened to the lady who watches over Paramount? While the New York critics have written eulogies about "The Doctor's Secret" and "Interference," they are not conceded to be outstanding hits as compared with the big successes of other companies. It has been a long time since

Paramount had a cinema that could be roadshowed. "Abie's Irish Rose" was a dismal flop. While most of the Paramount cinemas are above the average, it is due for a so-called super-film.

The Wall Street lads are accustomed to playing with chance, but generally they are the gods who determine what the public will accept. They have, however, entered an industry over which the ruler is Luck, and while the bankers can manipulate the m. p. stocks, they cannot make the masses go to see the pictures. Yea, truly, the movie is one business ruled by the wheels of Fortune—man is merely the gambler.

—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

### Brice Starts

Monte Brice, producer of Pathe short subjects, has prepared and will shortly start production of the Hugh Wiley "Wildcat" series, based on the well known Saturday Evening Post stories.

\* \* \*

### Powers Gets Role

Paul Powers has completed a part in "You Can't Buy Love," featuring Jean Hersholt, at Universal and has been assigned a role in Benny Rubin's next talking comedy for Universal.

\* \* \*

### Recovers Wardrobe

Lucien Prival's wardrobe, which was stolen last month from his home, has been recovered by the police. The actor says that everything is intact with the exception of a monocle and two pairs of spats.

\* \* \*

### Fawcett Signed

George Fawcett, beloved character actor of the screen, has joined the cast of "Wonder of Women," Clarence Brown's new production with Lewis Stone and Peggy Wood at the M-G-M studios.

## Mrs. R. Talmadge Passes Away

Mrs. Madge Frances Talmadge, wife of Richard Talmadge, motion picture star and producer, was laid at rest Wednesday in a mausoleum in the Forest Lawn Cemetery, after the celebration of a high requiem mass by Father McGovern in St. Agnes' Church, Vermont avenue and Adams street.

Mrs. Talmadge died late Easter Sunday night in her home at 12925 Riverside Dr., Van Nuys, after an illness of several months from a heart affliction. Mr. Talmadge was at her bedside at the time, he having been with her constantly since she was stricken. He suspended the production of a picture to be with her.

Mr. and Mrs. Talmadge had been one of cinemaland's most ideally married couples. In the twelve years of their married life they had never been separated and were known to their friends as "the honeymooners." They were married in "The Little Church Around the Corner" in New York while they were both performing in different acts on the same bill at the Hippodrome. Their romance was one of the theatre. At Mr. Talmadge's request she retired from the stage upon the completion of her vaudeville contract.

Mrs. Talmadge was Madge Frances Allen and was born at Gailsburg, Ill., thirty-one years ago. Although she was beautiful and had many opportunities to enter motion pictures she preferred to devote herself to her home and Mr. Talmadge's interests.

A tragic note in her passing is the fact that Mr. Talmadge, when she was first stricken, had their estate at Van Nuys enlarged and greatly improved for her special benefit, the work being completed just a few days before she died.

## Silent Versions for All 'U' Films

Every feature-length picture made at Universal City will have a silent version, it was announced by Carl Laemmle, president.

This policy is the result of a determination that neither the foreign market nor the theatres unwired for sound shall be neglected in the enthusiasm for talking pictures.

The Universal policy is in marked contrast with that of certain other producers who have announced that they will make no more silent pictures.

Universal, it was stated, will go out stronger than ever for the foreign market, regarded as menaced, as far as American producers are concerned, by the change to talking pictures. Abandonment of silent pictures is regarded as an extremely short-sighted policy by Carl Laemmle.

\* \* \*

### Dates Set for

#### Opening of Play

Definite dates have been announced by Producer A. H. Woods for the opening of Denison Clift's new play, "Scotland Yard." Rehearsals will start early in July with the premier in Atlantic City on August 5th, and the New York opening scheduled for August 28th. At the same time, "Liaison," another of Clift's plays will be rehearsing in London to open there early in September.

\* \* \*

### Valli Signed

Virginia Valli has been engaged for a role in "The Isle of Lost Ships," at First National.

\* \* \*

### O'Brien in Tay

#### Garnett Picture

Tom O'Brien has been signed for a role in "The Flying Fool," which Tay Garnett will direct for Pathe.

**HAROLD E. TARSHIS**  
*Laughable Titles With Sense*  
*Sensible Titles With Laughs*  
 Management Lichtig & Englander

**ROBERT LORD**  
*Under Contract to Warner Brothers*



# ALBERT DE MOND

## dialogue

**"GIVE AND TAKE"** George Sidney and Jean Hersholt

**"IT CAN BE DONE"** Glenn Tryon and Sue Carrol

**"RED HOT SPEED"** Reginald Denny

**"CLEAR THE DECKS"** Reginald Denny

**"COHENS and KELLYS In ATLANTIC CITY"** George Sidney

**"HIS LUCKY DAY"** Reginald Denny

**"YOU CAN'T BUY LOVE"** Jean Hersholt and Charley Chase

*Next Assignment:*

**"COMPANIONATE TROUBLES"** Reginald Denny

### "The Cohens and Kellys In Atlantic City"

*Los Angeles Evening Herald—*  
March 25, 1929.

"Vera Gordon supplies laughs as the wife of Cohen in 'The Cohens and Kellys in Atlantic City.' Kate Price does well as Mrs. Kelly. The laurels, however, go to Albert De Mond for dialogue and titles."

*Filmograph—*March 2, 1929.

"There are gags galore and 'whoopie' dialogue. Albert De Mond is to be praised for both."

### "Red Hot Speed"

*Inside Facts—*February 16, 1929.

"Week's best picture: 'Red Hot Speed.'

"Week's best titles: Albert De Mond in 'Red Hot Speed.'

"Week's best dialogue: Albert De Mond."

"The picture gets exceptionally fine aid from excellent dialogue and subtitles, which have many a sharp twist for a deserved laugh."

## To Encourage Stage Playwrights

Following a policy laid out during their first year, the Beverly Hills Community Players are encouraging amateur playwrights by producing one original play each month.

Members of the organization who have the urge to write plays, or any other young authors, are asked to submit their plays to Mrs. Norman Courtenay, 212 South Linden Drive, Beverly Hills, for consideration by the play committee.

During the fourteen months that this lively organization has been in existence, four original plays by local authors have been produced by the workshop. They are: "Food," by William De Mille; "Burglars Prefer Twin Beds," by Harold Shumate; "Columbine" and "You," two one-act plays by Colin Clements.

\* \* \*

## London Film Firm Floats Stock Issue

London.—Supremacy Films, Ltd., is to issue \$970,000 worth of stock divided into 800,000 shares of which 700,000 will be issued. Collinswood Hughes is managing director of the company, which recently secured rights to the film of the first Croydon-to-Karachi flight.

\* \* \*

## Dillon in New Contract to F. N.

John Francis Dillon has signed a new two-year contract to First National, his first assignment to be "Declasse" starring Billie Dove. He recently completed "Careers," starring Miss Dove, and "Scarlet Seas," Dick Barthelmess vehicle recently released.

\* \* \*

## New Denny Story

Reginald Denny, accompanied by his business manager Vernon Wood, has departed for his mountain cabin to write his next story which will be an all-dialogue Universal production.

\* \* \*

## Films Dropped at N. Y. House

Combination policy is being abandoned at the Riverside, R-K-O house at Broadway and 96th St., and the theatre is reverting to straight vaudeville.

# Warners to Quit Present Concern And Form New Company, Claim

(Copyright by The Film Mercury, permission to reprint granted if credit is given.)

The Warner Bros. are figuring prominently in The Film Mercury's rumor department this week.

On another page will be found details in connection with the proposition that Adolph Zukor controls the Warner organization. This epistle deals with the report that the Warner Bros. will soon quit the present Warner-First National combine and start a new film concern of their own.

This sounds like rather startling information, but many strange things are happening in the infant industry these days.

The Warner Bros. no longer personally control the Warner corporation. They are merely under contract to the corporation the same as other employees. This has already been announced several months ago by the Warner Bros. themselves, who stated that they had contracted with the bankers to remain for a certain period with the company.

The Warner Bros. undoubtedly assume that the day is not far distant when these bankers will seek to take definite charge of the company's affairs themselves and will not ask the Warners for a renewal of their contract. The Warners are smart enough to foresee this and they are also shrewd enough to realize that it would be foolish for them, if they hope to remain in the film game, to wait until they leave their present connection before laying plans for their future activities.

In line with this state of affairs it is rumored that the Warner Bros. are now laying the foundation for a new film organization of which they will be in personal control. It is understood that they are developing a new sound-on-film device which will be their personal property.

Announcement of the reconstruction of the old Vitagraph

studio has caused the report that the Warners may have this plant in mind as the future center of their film activities.

William Randolph Hearst is said to have been conferring with the Warners during the past few days and it is believed that this may also be in connection with a proposed new film organization. Hearst is understood to be skeptical as to how his film affairs may prosper under the new Fox regime at M-G-M and the publisher, according to report, has been talking with several different picture executives in regard to a new film corporation.

A dispatch received by The Film Mercury last week, from a New York financial man high up in banking circles, stated that the banking interests now ostensibly in control of the Warner organization are planning radical changes in the Warner personnel and will shortly ask for the resignation of the Warner Bros.

That the Warner Bros. may have anticipated such a development and are already taking steps to protect their future in the film industry seems a likely supposition. With new mergers occurring every few weeks it is only a matter of time before the Warner-First National outfit may be taken over by other interests. In the event of such a transaction the Warners would not only lose control of production affairs but they might find themselves out in the cold, with antagonistic executives dominating their company.

In the face of such a situation the Warners are confronted with the proposition of either

getting a new organization under way while there is still plenty of time or of waking up some morning to find that they no longer occupy a prominent position in the film industry.

The future activities of the Warner Bros. will be watched with interest.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

## Production Starts On Rubin Comedy

"Delicatessen," one reel all sound comedy featuring Benny Rubin, popular orchestra leader, went into production at Universal City this week.

It is being directed by Walter Fabian. "Delicatessen" is one of a series featuring Rubin.

\* \* \*

## Masquers Revel

Here are the sketches that will be seen at the "Masquers" playhouse Sunday night with Robert Armstrong as jester. "Walla Walla;" "It's in the Blood;" "The Interne;" "The Triget of Greva;" "Such Is Fame" and three others to be announced. The show Sunday is called the "April Fool Revel" and to make it plum full of foolery, Sam Hardy, harlequin, and Harry J. Brown announce that Moran and Mack, Leo Carrilo, Cliff Edwards, James Gleason, Earl Burnett and his Biltmore Hotel Trio; Irving Fisher and many others will take part.

\* \* \*

## "Evidence" For Laura LaPlante

"Evidence" will be Laura La Plante's next vehicle for Universal. William Wyler is to direct. "Evidence" is an original story by Edward J. Montagne.

NO ONE living has a better knowledge of all jokes ever written than myself. Many of these are so threadbare, that their present use in "talkie" dialogue is materially pulling down the audience value of what would otherwise be satisfactory pictures. I know which jokes to use—AND WHICH TO LEAVE OUT. And get this straight: I am constantly thinking up new laughs of "1929" vintage. JAMES MADISON, 323 North Citrus Avenue, Los Angeles. (Phone ORegon 5627).



## New Film Lab War Threatens

Indications of a new film laboratory war were seen this week with the beginning of a lawsuit and controversy between the Consolidated interests and the Bennett Film Laboratory of Hollywood.

Full details will not be known for a few days. Both sides are drawing up their lines for battle.

Consolidated claims that those in control of the Bennett Lab agreed to sell out to Consolidated and signed papers to that effect but later withdrew and refused to go through with the deal.

The Bennett people assert that the whole thing is another attempt to crush out the independents in the laboratory field. They are now gathering up asserted activities on the part of Consolidated which they claim will prove oppression and it is understood that a drive will be made to bring Government investigation into the laboratory business.

\* \* \*

### Finis Fox to Write Novelization

Finis Fox, scenarist, has been requested by publishers to prepare a dramatic novelization of "Evangeline," to be written from his scenario of the famous Longfellow poem.

Fox has just completed a newspaper serial of the poem, which he adapted and scenarized for a talking picture just produced by Edwin Carewe.

\* \* \*

### Sally O'Neil Signs For Warner Film

Sally O'Neil has been recalled from her vaudeville tour over the Fanchon & Marco circuit by Warner Bros., to essay a featured feminine role in "On With the Show," which Alan Crosland is directing as an all-dialogue picture.

\* \* \*

Toronto.—Sound equipment will be installed in forty Famous Players Canadian houses, by January, 1930. Twenty already show sound pictures. The chain operates about 130.

## Plans Film of Russian Court Life

Cliff Wheeler, who is now directing "The Prince of Hearts" for Imperial Pictures, which features Norman Kerry, Barbara Worth, George Fawcett and John Reinhardt in the leading roles, will follow the production up with a feature film dealing with the Russian Royal family. The picture is temporarily titled "Anastasia."

Wheeler is shooting the dialogue scenes for "The Prince of Hearts," as well as the silent version.

\* \* \*

### Joe E. Brown Gets N. Y. Stage Offer

Joe E. Brown, popular stage comedian, has received two offers to return to Broadway for featured roles in new plays. The footlight comic is in such demand in the film colony, however, that it will probably be many months before he will be able to break away for stage work.

\* \* \*

### Beatrice Van Now At First National

Beatrice Van is writing the scenario for "No, No, Nannette!" at First National.

\* \* \*

### Newmeyer to Direct for Pathe

Fred Newmeyer has been signed by Pathe to direct "Sailor's Holiday," in which Alan Hale will be featured. Newmeyer just completed the direction of an all-talking feature for Sono-Art.

\* \* \*

### Alan Crosland to Direct Barrymore

Alan Crosland will direct John Barrymore in "Captain Crack" at Warner Studios.

\* \* \*

### Ufa To Enlarge Scientific Films

Berlin.—Scientific and instructional department of Ufa productions, which produced the short subject, "Killing the Killer," is to expand short subject program for 1929-30.

\* \* \*

### Norman Kerry Signed

Norman Kerry has been signed to play opposite Dolores Costello in "Hearts in Exile," for Warners.

note on a  
young director

refers

to

casey robinson

sig schlager.

# **Have You Made Any Noise In Sound?**

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# THE FILM MERCURY

**VERITAS****VINCIT**Vol. 10, No. 1  
Twenty-Four PagesHOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA  
FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 1929Edited by  
TAMAR LANE

## Why Screen Players Should NOT Support the Equity Shop

### Will Equity Shop Really Help Actor?

After studying the present Actor vs. Producer situation from every angle, I advise the players: Do not give your support to the Equity Shop.

I think that Actors Equity is an admirable organization. I think that it has done a great deal of good for the player, especially those associated with the footlight drama.

Nevertheless, I think it would be a great mistake for the players to adopt the Equity Shop at this time. Instead of benefitting the film players, I am firmly convinced that the Equity Shop will work emphatically to their disadvantage under existing conditions in the studio.

The question of whether or not the producers are at all times dealing with the players in a fair manner is a secondary issue, in my estimation. Undoubtedly the players are being overworked in many instances and are not being given an even break in many other respects.

This, however, is subordinate to the general good of the players as a whole and to their profitable employment. Equity Shop sounds good, but in reality, if put into effect in the film industry it will not only have a harmful influence upon the industry as a whole but it

*(Continued on Page Three)*

### Big Film Schedule At First National

### Song Writers War Looms

### New \$10,000,000 Sound Firm

### Film Boom On At M-G-M

### Pacnet Beats Western Electric

### Equity Salvation of the Actor

## REVIEWS

**"Burlesque"****"Glad Rag Doll"****"Where East Is East"****"Exalted Flapper"**

**ANABEL LANE***Says*

An example of the discernment and judgment exercised by those who have been in the canned industry for many years seems to be shown by that of the kings and queens of the celluloid world, Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. In their ambitious effort to produce a Shakespearean play, these producers have announced that they will engage a Shakespearean expert and shortly after publicity issues forth that John Craig has been employed as the authority on the Bard of Avon.

When I was a little tot my home town, Boston, rang with the name of this popular actor. John Craig headed the Castle Square Stock Company. It is before that, however, I have been told, that John Craig appeared in Shakespeare. In recent years Mr. Craig has been seen in Broadway melodramas. While Mr. Craig may be a Shakespearean student and lover, it would seem a more sagacious move for Mr. Fairbanks and Miss Pickford to engage someone who has more recently been associated with Shakespearean productions. For if the movie presentations of this great writer's works are given in the declamatory manner generally used by the older players, few persons will be left in the theatre as the last reel unfolds.

Mr. Craig may come through splendidly, but I still feel it would have been wiser of the producers to sign someone who has had experience in Shakespearean plays during the last decade.

Robert Edeson agrees with George M. Cohan, that "Life's a Very Funny Proposition, After All," for when the Cohan number was ringing from the Battery to the Bronx along with "Give My Regards to Broadway," "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy," and other song hits of "Little Johnny Jones," Edeson was playing at an opposition theatre in "Class Mates." The late Tom Lewis, "stage father"

## War Threatens Between Song Writers and Film Producers

Trouble is brewing between the song writers from Broadway and the big studios, according to information that the Film Mercury has received from reliable sources.

The song-hit writers are dissatisfied with the conditions under which they are now working and claim that they are not receiving fair compensation for their efforts. They offer no complaint in regard to the salaries being paid, but assert that they do not receive any percentage of the gross revenue taken in on sales from their music in sheet form.

While a few of the melody boys are said to be receiving a royalty in addition to weekly salary, in all sales of music written specially for film productions, the majority of song writers now in Hollywood are reported to be drawing salaries and nothing else; the music becoming a property of the studio which takes all profits which accrue from sheet sales and phonograph recordings.

Many of the jazz hounds from New York rushed in and signed agreements along this line in order to get some of the easy money in the way of fat weekly pay checks and soft

of "Johnny," had also scored a triumph in the Cohan success and in the talking-singing version of it, Robert Edeson will enact the role in which Lewis enhanced his fame.

After their respective performances one night, when both Lewis and Edeson were making merry at the Lambs' Club, Tom dared Bob to exchange roles with him. "I'd like to see you in musical comedy," bantered Tom.

"I'll play that part of yours, yet," declared Bob.

Life IS a Funny Proposition, after all. Years have gone; Tom Lewis with them. Talkies have come and true words spoken in jest are the result. Edeson will soon start work in Tom Lewis' role in "Little Johnny Jones," at First National.

work. They apparently were at first willing to accept a salary as full compensation because the pay was profitable and it was a simple matter to knock off tunes for the producers in between golf and poker.

Recently, however, the songsters have awakened to the fact that by virtue of the exploitation and presentation a musical composition received when presented in a film production, almost any ordinarily catchy tune will sell into the hundred of thousands with a chance for many of them hitting close to the million mark. Under such circumstances the song writers claim they are being short-changed by the studios when they accept merely a salary. If the regular music royalty were being paid them the songwriters would receive far greater return for their efforts and they are now banding together to put such a policy into effect.

Several meetings have been held during the past few weeks by groups of Broadway composers and it now seems certain that they will shortly make a formal demand upon producers that they be given a regular royalty on all music sales, in addition to weekly salary.

In view of the fact that several of the film companies now own substantial interests in some of the big New York publishing houses it is expected that a strained situation will develop between the song writers and the studios in the near future.

The composers point out that stage and musical comedy producers always pay royalties on all music sales, and that film producers should be willing to adopt the same custom. Stage producers, however, do not pay salaries while the song writers are at work.

In taking issue with the melody composers Hollywood picture magnates assert that in many respects the present policy of placing song writers under contract to dash out special tunes has not worked out well

and is far from satisfactory. It is claimed that the studios do not get as good tunes by this method as they would if they were to simply pick out the best selections on the market from the various publishers and pay for the exclusive rights. If this system were used the studios would get sure fire hits instead of average tunes which are forced over only by virtue of a production tie-up.

Sharpshooters point out that three of the recent big musical film productions recently presented by prominent studios have come perilously near flopping because of the fact that the songs and music were of mediocre quality and lacked the catchiness that is so necessary to put over a musical show. It is contended that if these producers had gone into the open market and bought up tuneful melodies wherever they could find them their musical cinemas would have been considerably enhanced.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

### Quickie Film

#### Causing Talk

"No More Children," an independently produced feature, is being touted in film circles as one of the big box office clean-ups of the year. Picture has an interesting history. It was produced on a shot string by Albert Kelley, young Hollywood director, with the usual hardships which confront a producer who sets out to make this type of film.

Kelley not only directed, but he wrote the story, filmed the dialogue sequences and served in various other capacities. "No More Children" is a sex subject but Kelley is reported to have handled it with such delicacy and originality that the approval of censors is assured. Mrs. Wallace Read is said to control distribution rights and expects it to be her biggest clean-up to date.



# Why Screen Players Should NOT Support the Equity Shop

(Continued from Page One) will place the players in the power of the big studios rather than give the players the independence they expect.

I do not mean that the Equity Shop, if adopted, will not give the players a certain amount of power in regard to working conditions. It will. But, after all, what is the player chiefly interested in, working conditions or profitable employment?

Equity Shop will work to the detriment of profitable employment for the player because it will kill off the very thing that has been of such an advantage to the player in combatting the oppression of the big studios— independent production.

The independent film producers have been the means of supplying players with at least some sort of a cudgel to defend themselves from the big producers. In other words, the players as a last resort have always been able to secure work from the independents when the big studios have shut down on them. The big producers have realized this and know that the independents are waiting like buzzards to gobble up any player whom the prominent studios drop or do not utilize. The independents, in fact, have been a menace to the prominent magnates that has done the player more good than he will ever realize.

The Equity Shop, if adopted, will make it practically impossible for the average independent to operate. A year or two ago it would have been different because other workers in the film industry were not well organized or allied with the American Federation of Labor. The players could have operated their Equity Shop without regard to other types of studio workers.

Today the situation is different. Practically all of the other workers in the film industry, the cameramen, the electric-

ians, the grips, etc., are not only well organized but they are allied with the A. F. of L. If the players adopt the Equity, which is also allied with the A. F. of L., they will not only have to abide by a closed shop in regard to actors and actresses support the closed shop ruling but they will also be forced to in connection with all other types of workers. In other words, the players will not be able to work in any production unless every electrician, cameraman, grip, etc., is a member of the A. F. of L.

The big studios will be able to stand this expense. For the average independent it will be impossible. In the past the independent film producer has been able to ignore the union studio workers and engage freelance studio help because he has been able to secure his most important production item—box office names—without the chance of their demanding union studio workers.

The independent, being compelled to produce at a low cost, must use as few employees as possible. Many of the workers must double their efforts and do the work of two men. Under Equity Shop this will not be allowed. The independent producer would be forced to employ two—and in many cases three—times the number of studio help to turn out the same work he is now securing from a small staff. If he attempted to do this under Equity Shop the players would be forbidden to work for him.

This is not theory, but fact. The film production situation in New York, where the Equity Shop principle rules supreme, is so deplorable that it has become humorous. Three men are employed to do the work that one could easily handle. Many workers stand about for hours at a time doing little or nothing, but the producers are compelled to place them on the payroll.

I paid a visit to a studio in the vicinity of San Francisco a few months ago and found the same situation in effect there. The producers were compelled to pay out thousands of dollars that were totally unnecessary. Yet San Francisco theatrical and studio workers wonder why their city has flopped as a film center.

I am not against union. I favor them wherever they are beneficial. If there is any doubt about this I might add that my own plant is operated under a union card—and not by compulsion either.

When the footlight players sought to establish the Equity Shop in New York several years ago I not only favored it but I worked for it. The situation in the theatrical world, however, was quite different to that now existing in the film colony.

In the first place, stage producers are under no expense in regard to workers until a play is ready to open and the money is coming in. And even then the labor payroll is inconsequential. In film production the labor bill is very high and must be outlayed before the producer knows whether he will ever receive a penny of it back.

I might add however, that I know of several cases right here in Los Angeles, where stage plays have flopped because the producer has been unable to have an out-of-town try-out opening, due to the fact that he would not only have to employ his regular stage crew to open in San Diego or some other city but he would also be forced to employ a second crew of men in whatever town he selected for his try-out—and one of these crews would simply draw pay and do nothing. Being unable to stand this additional expense the producer has opened his play cold, without the benefit of a few test performances, and his has taken a quick nose-dive.

Again I say to players: Join

Equity if you wish to—it is a worthy organization. But refuse to support the Equity Shop, under present conditions, at least.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

## Canadian Famous And RKO Merge

Ottawa.—The Radio-Keith-Orpheum Corp. and the Famous Players Canadian Corporation, Ltd., entered into an agreement here this week for the organization of a new company to be known as the Radio-Keith-Orpheum (Canada), Limited, the capital stock of which they will own equally.

The Canadian company is wholly owned in Canada, Adolph Zukor having disposed of his entire holdings in the Canadian firm to them last March. They control 153 theatres in the Dominion and the new combine plans to take over a great many more, including the R-K-O houses now in operation north of the international boundary line.

\* \* \*

## "Broadway" to Open

At Biltmore June 17

Universal's most pretentious production an all-talking, dancing and singing screen version of the New York stage play, "Broadway," will be given its Western premiere at the Los Angeles Biltmore theatre, Monday evening, June 17. The opening will follow close on the heels of the termination of the run of "Show Boat," which closes its run Sunday night, June 16.

"Broadway," as pictured by Universal features Glenn Tryon, Evelyn Brent and Merna Kennedy in principal roles. It was supervised by Carl Laemmle Jr., directed by Dr. Paul Fejos and represents an expenditure of more than \$1,500,000.



## Equity vs. Producer Situation

Equity was struck! It will be interesting to watch the outcome. Eventually Equity will win—with the aid of the American Federation of Labor. But it is my belief that they threw their hat into the ring too soon. A year from now would have strengthened their cause and their organization. With the film industry in such a chaotic state and producers still groping to grasp the talking technique, was not the time to start the big fight.

Of course it was partly brought about by the terrible hours some of the studios have been working the players. It is all very well for some of the actors and actresses to give out interviews to the newspapers denying that they have been overworked or ill treated, but everyone in Hollywood knows the hours demanded by some of the companies have been preposterous. Also one or two of the studios have refused to pay for the time given to rehearsing. The players are entitled to time given to rehearsals—it is quite different from the stage where an actor gives four weeks hoping to get a six months or a years run as compared with a few days or weeks in a movie. Despite these unfair conditions, it would have been wiser to wait. The motion picture players would be delighted to see executives turn their shoulder on stage folk.

The mistake film producers make is looking at Equity as an enemy. This is one union—if it is such—which deals in a fair, impartial manner. Just as theatrical magnates were unable to control the behavior of players or contracts with their actors and actresses. M. P. producers have proved themselves equally incapable and impotent in their handling of stars, etc.

In the past week I have heard from an agent, a director and an executive about seven actors who were drunk on different sets, causing inconvenience and loss of money and time. If producers are fools enough to continue hiring these actors, thereby lessening the morals of studios and adding to overhead, it

will be to their advantage to have Equity put their organizations in order by not permitting its members to play with members of bad standing. In the matter of contracts, too, Equity will see justice is done to the producer as well as the actor.

Equity, however, errs in having Frank Gilmore in charge of the situation. Mr. Gilmore knows the theatre and its conditions and peculiar working circumstances, but he does not know the film industry. The same rules and obligations cannot apply to both. Instead of Mr. Gilmore, a person thoroughly acquainted with screen life should be at the head of the celluloid branch of this organization. I do not know if Mr. Gilmore has precipitated this movement of Equity's, but I do remember in 1927 the displeasure with which he looked upon the council's decision that Equity was not prepared to enforce Equity shop. I still believe it is a little premature.

If the producers, though, would realize they will be helped instead of hurt by Equity, an intelligent understanding could evolve out of the present confusion.

—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

### Rosebrook Here for Musical Work

Leon Rosebrook, noted musical director, has arrived in Hollywood and will probably join one of the big studios. Rosebrook served as musical director for the Ziegfeld Follies, Earl Carroll Vanities, as well as many Schubert musical successes. He was also staff arranger for the Harms Music Co. for three years and has had a wide and varied career in the music world.

\* \* \*

### Nancy Carroll In New Long-Term Contract

Rewarded for her work opposite Hal Skelley in "The Dance of Life," Nancy Carroll has signed a new long-term contract to Paramount. At present she is playing opposite Chas. "Buddy" Rogers in "Illusion."

## Film Boom Under Way at M-G-M

Schedule listing fourteen major film features as "Shooting" or "Cutting," and twenty-three more to go into production within the next few weeks, indicate the busiest summer season in the history of the M-G-M studios, and will probably set a new production record.

The new pictures range from music revues to vivid dramatic subjects, the entire schedule, practically, being in the medium of talking pictures, and all classed as sound productions.

Just finished and in course of editing are Cecil B. DeMille's huge talking picture "Dynamite," King Vidor's all negro talking and singing drama "Hallelujah," John Gilbert's Tolstoy drama "Redemption," his debut in talking films, "The Hollywood Revue of 1929" with Marion Davies, John Gilbert, Norma Shearer, Joan Crawford, William Haines, Buster Keaton and many other famous stars in a musical spectacle; "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney," a talkie starring Norma Shearer; "Thunder," Lon Chaney railroad drama, "Speedway," starring William Haines; "The Single Standard," starring Greta Garbo, and many others.

Forthcoming productions will include Molnar's "Olympia," in which Lionel Barrymore will direct John Gilbert; "The Bugle Sounds," Commander Zinovi Pechkoff's story of the Foreign Legion, in which Geo. Hill will direct Lon Chaney; "Cotton and Silk," first talking, singing picture of the Duncan Sisters; the new show life story starring Van and Schenck; "Trader Horn," being filmed in Africa by W. S. Van Dyke; a new show life comedy by Edward Sedgwick starring Buster

## Cop Invents New Talkie Device

Detroit. — A new Detroit-built sound device for the screen which, its sponsors claim, will revolutionize the presentation of talking pictures in large and small theatres throughout the country, was demonstrated in the Schubert-Lafayette theatre, this week, with theatre owners engineers and representatives of movie producers present.

The device, known as "Harmony: the Machine with the Human Voice," is the invention of Detective Lieutenant Royal A. Baker, police moving picture censor, and a group of local engineers.

A single motor controls the projecting machine and the turntables supporting the sound records to insure that the sound will keep pace with the film, and a controlling device beneath the turntable absorbs vibrations and keeps the records from scratching or "weaving."

The distinctive feature of the device, it is said, is a baffleboard of an original design placed directly behind the screen in such a manner that the sound vibrations are transmitted to the audience by the screen itself, rather than through loud speakers.

\* \* \*

### No Silent Version

There will be no silent versions of "On with the Show" and "The Desert Song," Warners states.

Keaton; "Anna Christie," in which Clarence Brown will direct Greta Garbo in her first talking vehicle, "Jungle," starring Joan Crawford; "Ordeal," directed by Charles Brabin; "The Thirteenth Chair," directed by Tod Browning, and others of equal note.

**J**AMES MADISON translates to the articulate screen the same qualities of spontaneity and humor that have made him the author of over one thousand hits in vaudeville. 323 North Citrus Avenue, Los Angeles. (ORegon 5627)



"Estelle Taylor is its real star"—*Regina Crewe, N. Y. American.*

"Estelle Taylor just about walks away with the picture"—Harrison Carroll, L. A. Herald.

"She dominates every scene"—*Norbert Lusk, L. A. Times.*

"Miss Taylor is by far the best number in this entry"—George Gerhard, N. Y. Evening World.

". . . an histrionic triumph"—*Rob Reel, Chicago American.*

"Estelle Taylor easily monopolizes the praise"—Betty Colfax, N. Y. Graphic.

". . . far surpasses . . ."—*Sax Bradford, L. A. Record.*

"Estelle Taylor is the most magnificent menace of the screen"—Bland Johaneson, N. Y. Mirror.

"Suggesting once again what a fine actress Miss Taylor would be if given the proper parts"—*Richard Watts Jr., N. Y. Herald-Tribune.*

"One wonders why a Hollywood producer hasn't taken her in hand long since and nursed her to the celebrity she deserves"—George Gerhard, N. Y. Evening World.

"'Where East Is East' . . . its acting honors belong almost wholly to Estelle Taylor"—*Philip K. Scheuer, L. A. Times.*

"Estelle Taylor is a knockout"—Film Daily.

"Estelle Taylor with sloe-eyed certainty walked away with it"—*Eleanor Barnes, L. A. News.*

"Miss Taylor snatches away the picture completely"—Richard Watts Jr., N. Y. Herald-Tribune.

"Estelle walks away with the picture"—*Walter D. Hickman, Indianapolis Times.*

". . . was stealing the star's honors"—Ken Taylor, L. A. Express.

". . . a characterization certain to create great discussion"—*Land, Variety.*

". . . remarkably clever in one of those difficult roles so liable to be thoroughly banal"—John S. Cohen Jr., N. Y. Sun.

"Why have the producers let her stay so long off the screen"—*Harrison Carroll, L. A. Herald.*

"If we had her under contract we'd rush right out and buy 'The Shanghai Gesture' and let her do the role that Florence Reed did"—*Rob Reel, Chicago American.*

## CHARLES S. DUNNING, Manager

5528 Santa Monica Blvd.

GRanite 7862

# THE FILM PARADE

*As seen by* RICHARD WATTS JR.

Photoplay Editor, *New York Herald-Tribune*

Motion picture critics are, of course, generous fellows who are never so happy as when saying nice things about the neglected, but worthy, actors of the cinema. Though I strive desperately to be conscientious in the matter, I do sometimes feel that, while expending the proper amount of enthusiasm on such earnest workers as the directors and the dialogue writers, I confine any appreciation of histrionic feats to one brief, and incomplete paragraph at the end of a review. In the hope of doing tardy justice, therefore, I would ask your leave to discuss in this sermon some of the recent performances that had the great good fortune to give me pleasure.

First of all, there should be set down the portrayal that Mr. Paul Muni brought to his first film work, "The Valiant." The story of "The Valiant" was, in a slightly artificial way, an effective and moving one, but, even though it was sensibly directed by Mr. Wm. K. Howard, it would have seemed a pretty incredible bit of theatrical trickery had it not been for Mr. Muni's performance. In a part that would have given almost any actor justification for eye-rolling and heavy emotionalism, he was quite simple and even a bit subtle, going in for the virtues of underacting, rather than the more blatant effects of dramatic pompousness.

If you have followed the recent New York stage with any care, you should remember Mr. Muni as that grand young Jewish actor, who was so impressive both in "Four Walls" and "We Americans." It is no mean compliment to say that, in his first screen effort, he is every bit as expert as he was in the theatre. Certainly, too much can hardly be said about his portrayal. There have been several admirable performances in the talking pictures, from Chester Morris' debonair assassin in

"Alibi" to Warner Baxter's sentimental hold-up man in "In Old Arizona," but none of them has been more striking than was Mr. Muni, as the heroic murderer who refused to admit his identity, lest his mother and sister be made unhappy by his death.

Of interest to any one who is a veteran follower of the films is the discovery of just how important players of the silent screen are behaving in their first encounters with the sinister microphone. During the last month or so, four distinguished performers of the dying inaudible drama have tried their luck at the new school of the cinema with varying results, Mr. Ronald Colman, there can be little doubt, proved the most successful, since, in that handsomely produced melodrama, "Bulldog Drummond," he was several times more important a player than when he was depending on pantomime.

On the other hand, Miss Mary Pickford certainly didn't profit by the new invention—*aesthetically*, at least. It is true that she was handicapped by the unsatisfying adaptation of that grand little tragedy, "Coquette," in which she was starred, but, in addition to this, her performance seemed sadly lacking in the proper emotional expertness. Far more successful, I thought, were the Misses Corinne Griffith and Clara Bow. Neither of them revealed a particularly musical voice, but both spoke in a manner that was so natural and so completely lacking in elocution school affectation, as well as so agreeably in character, that, despite the objections of those who anticipated more melody in their tones, I, for one, was entirely pleased with both of them.

One of the best performances I have encountered in several months of studious cinema investigation was that of the lit-

tle blonde named Joyce Compton, who was the nasty, sneaking little tattle-tale in Miss Bow's "The Wild Party." This practically unknown young lady played her completely unsympathetic part with such courageous mercilessness that her characterization became a beautifully realistic piece of work that deserves far more credit than it is likely to receive. Unless I am terribly mistaken, this Miss Compton is a real actress.

The most moving player of that lethargic, but handsome and courageously faithful, screen adaptation of "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" was contributed, not by the somewhat frantic Miss Lily Damita, who had the most showy role, but by the prettily earnest Miss Raquel Torres, who was the nice native heroine of "White Shadows in the South Seas." In the comparatively colorless part of the convent girl, Pepita, she was so completely touching that only the credible performance of the unheard-of Mr. Duncan Renaldo, as the twin who mourned his dead brother, kept her from snatching the entire picture from the outstretched hands of her higher-paid colleagues.

There are so many other players who should be considered within the limits of this survey that they will have to be grouped with what is perhaps just a trace of confusion. Permit me to say, therefore, with some haste, that Miss Joan Bennett, in "Bulldog Drummond," was just about the most lyric heroine imaginable; that Miss Mona Rico's villainess was the most stirring feature of John Barrymore's "Eternal Love"; that Miss Dorothy Janis was grand as the native girl in "The Pagan" and that Miss Mary Nolan was swell in "Desert Nights."

After taking breath for a moment it should be added that,

in "Close Harmony," Jack Oakie demonstrated that those of us who have always suspected he was one of the ablest of screen comics, were justified; that Ramon Novarro was unusually good in "The Pagan"; that Ullrich Haupt was a fine villain in "Madame X"; that Charles Ruggles, Katherine Francis and Betty Lawford, in "Gentlemen of the Press," and Roy D'Arcy, Cyril Chadwick and Walter Long in "The Black Watch," were of great help to their picture, and that Miss Myrna Loy is becoming a screen personality, no matter what you may think of their acting. All of them have helped make recent cinema-going a less painful task than it might have been.

\* \* \*

## Theme Songs for

### Darmour Stories

All of the Darmour-RKO Witwer stories will have a theme song especially written for each production. The first musical number was written for the production now in the making by Lee Zahler and Pat O'Dea.

\* \* \*

## Pathe Plans 30 Features

Pathe will have 30 features on its 1929-30 schedule. Details of the new program now are being worked out and will be outlined to the sales force June 27 at Atlantic City by Phil Reisman, general sales manager.







*With Pathe*

*Joseph Franklin Poland is Now Under  
Contract to Pathe to Write and Supervise.*

*"Sailor's Holiday," Alan Hale's vehicle,  
prepared for the screen by Mr. Poland in  
association with William Sistrom, from the  
original Poland story and dialogue, is now in  
production.*

*Announcement Authorized by  
Sig Schlager  
In Association With  
Myron Selznick*

## New Sound Stage for Tec-Art

RCA recording system has been installed at Tec-Art, according to an announcement by Al Mannon, president of the studio. Sound tests made last week were pronounced "perfect," with the result that the first picture to be shot on the new Tec-Art sound stages with the Photophone device went into production Monday. This is "The Sentinel Light," a Beacon production.

While RCA will not be the official system used, its installation is regarded as another important gesture on the part of studio officials to provide the independents who produce there with the highest type of equipment and service.

Tec-Art is unique in that it is the only studio to have several recording systems. Two new sound stages have recently been completed, with work rapidly progressing on the sound-proofing of two more. Approximately twenty independent companies are now housed at

**Change Title of Fanny Brice Film**  
"It's a Pleasure" is the title definitely selected for Fannie Brice's first all talking, all singing United Artists picture.

Change of title from the tentative "Sex Appeal" was announced yesterday by John W. Considine, Jr., general production executive of the Joseph M. Schenck organization.

Miss Brice's starring vehicle is an original story being prepared by John McDermott, well known Hollywood scenarist, aided by Billy Rose, the famous comedienne's husband, who is also writing special songs for the production.

\* \* \*

### 30 RKO Production

RKO will hold its annual sales meeting at the Drake, Chicago, starting June 23, and lasting throughout the week. Lee Marcus, general sales manager, will outline the 30 pictures on the 1929-30 program, during the sessions.

the studio, which is said to be the largest of its kind in the world.

## New \$10,000,000 Sound Producing Company Formed

### \$500 A Day Charge for Holdovers

Boston.—Thumbs down on the practice of holding over prints has been voted by the arbitration board here, in returning a \$11,000 verdict against Lee Gorman, who operates the Riverside, Bridgeton, Me., Paramount, Pathe and Fox were the plaintiffs, their case being presented by Louis Nizer, secretary of the New York Film Board. Twenty-two violations, covering holdovers for as many separate days, were found against the exhibitors, the board awarding \$500 for each violation.

\* \* \*

### Tiffany-Stahl Buys "Mr. Antonio"

Leo Carrillo, who arrived in New York last week after an absence of more than a year, was hastily recalled to Hollywood to make his first talking and singing production for Tiffany-Stahl entitled "Mr. Antonio," the stage play by Booth Tarkington played for a long while on the legitimate stage by Otis Skinner. After a conference held in New York with Grant L. Cook, Vice-President of the company, in which many stories and plays were discussed, it was decided that "Mr. Antonio" would best suit Mr. Carrillo's talents as the first vehicle.

\* \* \*

### O. Henry Talking Series

A series of talking pictures based on O. Henry's stories will be produced at the RCA Photophone Gramery studios in New York by Leo Taub. Prominent Broadway players of the legitimate stage are being recruited for the series, which will include roles from "The Trimmed Lamp" and other collections.

\* \* \*

### Eddie Quillan's Next

Eddie Quillan, Pathe featured player, on the completion of "Joe College," will probably start work on "Gasoline Gypsies," an original play by Kenyon Nicholson, the dramatist.

Burtis U. Cain, President of Synchronetone Pictures Corporation, announces today the merger of Synchronetone Pictures Corporation, Kennedy Pictures Corporation, Colorart Pictures, Inc., and Colorart Productions, Ltd., into a new Ten Million Dollar Delaware corporation, known as Colorart-Synchronetone Pictures Corporation, Ltd.

The Synchronetone Pictures Corporation is manufacturing a sound device for theatres. Colorart Productions, Ltd., has been producing pictures entirely in Technicolor over a period of years and is now branching out into a larger field. In addition to producing short subjects and features in color, they will produce a number of super-special all talking productions in black and white.

The Synchronetone apparatus is being rapidly installed and the company is also preparing its first two super-special productions which will be directed by F. W. Murnau and Robert J. Flaherty. Mr. Flaherty leaves June 12th to begin production on his first super-special for Colorart. Colorart is negotiating for several other famous Hollywood stars and directors.

The officers of the new corporation are: Burtis U. Cain, President; Aubrey M. Kennedy, Vice-President; Curtis F. Nagel, Vice-President; Howard C. Brown, Treasurer; and Mervyn R. Dowd, Secretary.

Burtis U. Cain is also director of the Bank of Hollywood, Bank of West Hollywood and director and organizer of the International Iron and Steel Company.

Aubrey M. Kennedy was formerly director-general of Essanay, Universal, American and Goldwyn Pictures Corporation. In addition to the officers of the corporation, the Board of Directors consists of David E. Fulwider, President of Bank of West Hollywood; Grant L. Cook, President, Tiffany-Stahl Productions, Inc.; and G. R. Dexter, President, Bank of Hollywood.

## Paul Perez



... has completed titling Billie Dove's "Careers" directed by John Francis Dillon. He is now titling "Broadway Babies," directed by Mervyn Le Roy, and starring .....

## Alice White

First National - Vitaphone

Management Lichtig & Englander



John Barrymore

*in*

“General Crack”

*Direction ALAN CROSLAND*

Pauline Frederick

*in*

“Evidence”

*Direction JOHN ADOLFI*

*Warner Brothers Vitaphone Pictures*  
*in production*

DIALOGUE *and* SCREEN PLAY

J. Grubb Alexander

# WRITING THE TALKING PICTURE

By FRANCES AGNEW

The silent vs. the talking movie! What's the difference in the writing of them? This is a question which, like many other questions, would elicit at least two replies—depending on the viewpoint! A well-known stage playwright recently discussing his experience with film talkies, described them as "stage dialogue with action emphasized." While a prominent screen writer phrases it as "screen action emphasized with dialogue." Though it sounds paradoxical, there is a difference.

But in the final analysis, there is actually little difference between writing a talkie and writing a silent drama. The only real difference is that whereas we used to write photoplays containing approximately one hundred spoken titles which the audience *read*, leaving the rest to their imagination from the action and lip movement, we now write photoplays containing approximately five hundred *literally* spoken titles which the audience *hears* (if they are not *too* deaf), leaving almost nothing to their imagination!

Talking movies are really too young to have developed an individual technique of construction. Perhaps they will later. But by reason of the limitations, or possibilities if you prefer, of the camera, talkies have employed, with few exceptions, more of the screen technique than that of the stage. They have been written as *photoplays* with dialogue—not just plays with dialogue. And logically so.

A screen writing technique, developed by the combined abilities of the producer, supervisor, director, writer and cameraman through long years of experiment, is certainly an excellent basis for the construction of a photoplay talkie.

This technique and the broad possibilities as well as the limitations of the camera, have been the principal causes for the changes which the stage play or best seller has invariably suffered—or enjoyed—in its adaptation to the silent drama. And isn't it a fact that the stage play

or best seller in silent drama form, drew audiences which knew they would be delighted—or annoyed—by an elaborated if somewhat changed version of the source of the silent picture? IF the screen technique is not to be employed in making talkies, with action and pantomime picturing vividly what lines usually describe only drably, in comparison; if talkies are to be just literal celluloid versions of stage plays, for instance, isn't it quite likely that the cash customers who have seen the foot-light productions will stay away from the celluloid versions, for the same reason that they wouldn't see the same stage play twice? Thereby, making the box offices in the big cities, at least, suffer. Incidentally, this argument may lead producers to feel more kindly toward original talkie plays, and to reject a stage play which does not lend itself to something more picturesque than just a literal celluloid version. A point in mind is a well known stage play which recently played two successful engagements in our local theatres, simultaneously with its runs in other leading cities. When the literal talking production of it was released, it was voted an excellent talkie but such an exact duplicate of the stage play that those who had seen the latter had no desire to see it again—in canned form.

All of which gets us back to the point—that we are after all producing movies with dialogue, not dialogues with movies.

Consequently, dialogue written for talkies must have the same faults or virtues which titles written for the silents had—story value and condensation. In the talkies, more than on the stage, every line of dialogue should definitely advance the story or depict character, whether it be comic or dramatic. Padding in dialogue is obvious on the stage and conspicuously dragging and boring on the screen. We pardon it on the stage, even with good playwrights, when used for a brief time lapse, to permit a character

to change clothes, for instance, but that excuse can't justify it on the screen. We have the fade, cut, and dissolve to cover all inclination to pad.

(P.S.—A perfect talkie dialogue has of course not been written—and never will be. Like the great American drama, it will be always in the offing! Because all opinions are not alike!)

Screen technique, too, gives us more sequences—or acts. Fade-outs, synonymous with curtains. The dropping of a curtain on the stage is usually a quicker action than the screen fade-out. How much more important then, it would seem, that each sequence have a very logical "curtain;" that each sequence be finished with a laugh in action or dialogue, or a tense almost tragic moment in pantomime or speech, so that the audience is either too hilarious or too engrossed to be aware of the mechanical soundless yet sounding sound track or disc while the scene is fading. (Some day not far off, the geniuses responsible for sound on film are going to eliminate the sound of the sound track when it is accompanying silent footage—just as they eliminated the scratch on phonograph records.)

And another important difference between writing talkie dialogue and stage dialogue is to be chalked up to the fact that motion pictures in the majority of theatres are still a continuous performance. In the theatre the playwright can depend on getting his audience in their seats within fifteen minutes after his first curtain rises. If they are later, it is unlucky for them, and more unlucky for those seated around them! But, the talkie dialogue writer, like the title writer, must remember that his audience strolls in during any reel and unless the dialogue gives him some idea of the story that has gone before and acquaints him with the characters, he isn't going to be a satisfied cash customer. He'll wait to see the beginning but he

## 70 Paramount Films This Year

Paramount is holding two sales conventions this year, the first at St. Louis, June 15, and the second June 21 at Atlantic City. At these sessions, S. R. Kent will announce the approximate 70 pictures on the 1929-30 schedule. Of the number, 33 will be starring pictures, while about 20 will be musical comedies.

\* \* \*

### Homfilm Co. Now Stock Company

Washington.—Homfilm Co. of Berlin, has been converted into a joint stock company with capital of approximately \$50,400, advises a report to the M. P. Section of the Dept. of Commerce. The board consists of Dr. Sudekum, a former minister of the Reich, Count Valentin Henckel von Donnersmarck, Jules Stern and Dr. George Werner Engelmann. Directors are Hohenberg, Oppenheimer and Dr. Markus.

must also be able to enjoy the ending as he sees it. He may not have the time to sit through the ending again—nor would the exhibitor want him to. The exhibitor! Another one to consider! After all, he is of some little importance, anyway.

(P. S.—Miss Agnew has two current talkies to her credit—"Syncopation" for R.K.O. and "The Rainbow Man" introduced at the Paramount Theatre this week.)

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# ROBERT HILL

DIRECTOR

The King of Minstrels

Eddie Leonard

in

Melody Lane

A Universal

Movietone Production

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# THE FILM MERCURY

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7556 Melrose Avenue

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Subscription Rates: \$3 for 52 issues; \$2 for 26 issues anywhere in the United States and its Possessions. 25% surcharge on Canadian subscription. 50% surcharge on Foreign subscriptions.

Mercury Publishing Company will not be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, letters or photographs and all such material is received at the sender's risk.

FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 1929

## Big Schedule for F. N. Studios

The biggest summer production schedule in the history of First National Pictures got under way last week at First National-Vitaphone studios in Burbank. With the arrival of several Eastern stage stars, to join the regular First National screen stars, the busiest summer in the history of the big plant is planned.

Pictures included on this production schedule are as follows:

Colleen Moore in "Footlights and Fools," a story of an actress, in which Miss Moore will both sing and dance. Wm. A. Seiter is directing.

Marilyn Miller in "Sally," her great stage success. Alexander Gray plays opposite her and Joe E. Brown and Pert Kelton are in the cast. John Francis Dillon directs.

Irene Bordoni in "Paris," her recent stage play. Jack Buchanan, popular English juvenile, is her leading man. Clarence Badger directs.

Corinne Griffith in "Lilies of the Field," an all-dialogue special.

Richard Barthelmess in "Young Nowhere," the story of an apartment house elevator boy. Frank Lloyd will direct.

Billie Dove in an untitled picture of society life.

Leatrice Joy in "A Most Immoral Lady." John Griffith Wray is directing and Walter Pidgeon plays opposite Miss Joy.

Alice White in "Playing Around," the Vina Delmar story.

Dorothy Mackaill in the dramatic story, "The Woman on the Jury."

Jack Mulhall in a football classic, "The Forward Pass."

## Hatton Makes Settlement

With payment of \$17,500, Raymond Hatton, screen player, has settled the law suit brought against him by John C. Ragland, players' manager, for 175,000. The case was settled out of court. The suit was filed two years ago by Ragland, soon after Hatton obtained a contract with Paramount. Ragland alleged that \$175,000 was due him for commissions and services. Hatton is no longer under contract to Paramount, but is a free-lance player.

\* \* \*

## Trem Carr Filming First All-Dialogue Feature Production

Trem Carr is producing his first 100 per cent talking picture, "Handcuffed," using the National Film Recording studios on Sunset boulevard. Duke Worne is directing Arthur Hoerl's story, the cast consisting of Virginia Browne Faire, Dean Jagger, Wheeler Oakman, James Harrison, Broderick O'Farrell and George Cheseboro.

\* \* \*

## Dudley Digges, New York Director, to U. A.

Dudley Digges, New York stage director, has been signed by Samuel Goldwyn for the role of "Viday" in Colman's starring picture, "Condemned," and will also direct dialogue. F. Richard Jones has the pictorial direction. Production in thirty days.

Eddie Buzzell in the George M. Cohan success, "Little Johnny Jones," with Mervyn LeRoy directing.

Several other important specials, with all-star casts, will be added to this list within the next month.

## Universal Lists 53 New Pictures

Fifty-three of fifty-five Universal features will be announced for 1929-30 at Universal's two sales conventions, scheduled by General Sales Manager M. Van Praag. The first meeting is scheduled June 15 at Kansas City, the second June 22 at Atlantic City. On the list will be: three designed as supers, six titled Laemmle Specials, 24 of the Jewel type and 20 or 22 westerns.

\* \* \*

## Editors Join Darmour

Edgar Scott and Dwight Caldwell have been added to the film editing department of Darmour-RKO. Both are experienced talking picture editors, the former having been connected with Warner Bros. since the time of the Vitaphone was first introduced.

## German Firms Fight Against W. E. Film

Berlin.—While Western Electric was successful in obtaining dissolution of injunctions obtained by the Klangfilm-Tobis combine to halt showing of "The Singing Fool," via Western Electric equipment at the Gloria Palast, the German firms intend to continue their fight against what they charge is patent infringement. Meanwhile, the Jolson film was received enthusiastically.

\* \* \*

## Four for Tchechowa Co.

Washington. — Tchechowa Film Co. of Germany, will produce four features for the coming season in all of which Olga Tchechowa will appear as star. The pictures are "Will o' the Wisp," "Jump in the Train," "Second Youth" and "The Fool."

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# **TOM REED**

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## This Business of Credit Grabbing

New York City  
June 10th

After thinking it over it certainly seems a hard job for an ordinary movie fan, and even the best of critics, to assign credit or discredit to anyone connected with a picture. Not that it matters, but who is responsible for the defects in various films. They might have been there in the original story or the one who is credited with the adaptation or the scenario might have been the culprits. It could just as easily have been a quirk in the directorial brain. Yet with all these uncertainties; critics continue to hand out praise and censure with the greatest of ease. I have a suggestion which may brand me as an impractical aesthete and an ignoramus to boot.

There is only one objection to this plan and a very potent one it may be. Do the producing companies allow anyone to reprint their scripts. I know they loan them, but could you, for example, print once a month, six months or a year a selected continuity or a section of one. There would of course be comparisons between the script and actual production. It might enable us to see a bit clearer just who has his finger in the movie credit pie. If the writers knew that their efforts would be criticized directly, instead of the vague and indirect way in which they are judged at present, he would naturally take more pains with his script.

In order to impress his personality, he might go out of his way to put over quirky bits of business, but at any rate he would be trying, for eyes would now be levelled on him which never dreamt of his existence heretofore. Then there is the effect on the director. No more reflected glory. No more credit for every single bit of business. No, I haven't any grudge against the directors, but it does seem unfair the way critics hand it all to him, even to his effect on the actors. He has become a hypnotist, a god.

Thus far, almost every book that I pick up which deals with the movies, closes with a rhapsody of the director, especially

the director of the future. He will direct his own picture, conceive the story, adapt it, make a flawless continuity with every camera direction clearly planned, he will plan sets, lighting effects, edit it; in fact do everything except playing every part in multiple exposure and turning the crank himself. In a way, you can hardly blame these critics.

Weighed down by the general trash they must wade through week after week, they lose their balance when they see something promising. They make idols of their favorite directors, and how they will defend him. Murnau is an example.

You remember how the Last Laugh suddenly gained a happy ending. A picture so obviously artistic should have a happy ending, and by those sullen Germans at that. Unthinkable. Everyone went around lauding him for the tragedy and saying; look what a gift for the tragic he has, he would have left it with a sad ending, but they had to change it for "American consumption," Americans, you know, must have their happy endings, isn't he a tragic genius, though. Maybe it was so, the first time, it still doesn't seem believable. Finally their idol is imported. Fox promises to keep hands off and let him do as he pleases. The basis for the forthcoming picture is to be A Trip to Tilsit by Sudermann, of course a German, therefore tragic.

The critics were on pins and needles, waiting for Sunrise. Finally it came. With the exception of two or three insurgent critics, it was hailed as a masterpiece. Anyone who denied it was blind. The critics put him on a pedestal and they meant to keep him there. They added, without exception, "the Fox organization forced Murnau to tack on a happy ending."

Some time later Murnau himself came out with a statement that the ending was his own, he felt sorry for the characters, an unhappy ending would have seemed unnatural to him. But who listens to directors' statements. One of our

## Writes Stage Play

Monte Brice has written a stage play, "Just Twenty-One," for Russell Gleason. The play will be presented in Hollywood in the near future, it is expected.

local lady critics commented, after seeing Four Devils, that Murnau wanted his two acrobats to fall, his villainess thereby triumphant in her designs; but that the Fox organization wouldn't let him. Where do they get this information, or can they possibly invent it. Murnau is just about through now. His latest, Our Daily Bread seems to have vanished into thin air, and the talkies certainly mean him no good.

As I said before, I have no grudge against directors, nor any particular animus against Murnau. His use of the camera is almost enough to make one forget story, acting and all the usual ingredients of a successful movie.

This printing of scenarios, may, then, take some of these directors down from their pedestals. On the other hand it is sure to have another effect with other directors. They like glory with the rest of them. We may be treated to the sight of directors inverting scenarios, in order to show that they also have original ideas and are not bound to copy scene by scene from the scenarist. They, too, will want to impress their personality. I do not presume to say whether this probable competition will or will not be beneficial to the whole, that is a question which you should be better able to answer.

Sincerely,  
Victor Kandel.

## Fox Confab in N. Y. June 17

New York.—Fifty-two pictures will be announced as the Fox line-up for 1929-30, when district and branch managers assemble June 17 at the Park Central, New York, for the annual sales convention. James R. Grainger, general sales manager, will preside. Winfield Sheehan will come on from the West to attend.

\* \* \*

## Rebuilding of Chaplin Studios Costs \$100,000

Rebuilding of the Chaplin studios, necessitated by the removal of 15 feet from the front of the plant because of the widening of La Brea avenue, began Monday. Alfred Reeves, president and general manager, announces. Expenditures aggregating \$100,000 are planned in rebuilding the front and in general improvements, according to Reeves.

\* \* \*

## Leatrice Joy Talkie

Leatrice Joy's initial starring vehicle for First National-Vitaphone Pictures, "A Most Immoral Lady," went into production this week under the direction of John Griffith Wray, at the big Burbank film plant. It will be her first talking picture since "The Bellamy Trial," and her first film appearance since her triumphal tour in vaudeville.

\* \* \*

## Jolson to Appear in "Mammy" Late in Aug.

Al Jolson, now in New York, will return to Warner Bros. soon. His next Warner-Vitaphone picture will be "Mammy," to go into production late in August.

# HAROLD E. TARSHIS

## [TITLES & DIALOGUE]

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## Song Writers Now Reign Supreme

There is an old adage "every dog has its day"—and it certainly holds true of the motion picture industry. Time was when the star was everything and the satellites certainly took advantage of it, ruling with as temperamental and devastating a reign as the kings and queens of yore. Then the director became the important thing and these ringmasters made the players, producers and workers jump through the hoop.

After it was discovered that a star and director meant little unless the story was worthwhile, scenario writers became the lords of the studios. Not feeling their jobs were necessarily temporary (not depending on a grecian profile or youth) the writers did not suffer with an inferiority complex. So most of them used judgment. While momentarily pretenders have gained the throne, the rightful rule scenarists will again be in control.

Due to the theme song and musical revue vogue, song writers are enjoying the fawning and flattering that accompanies rulership. But if rumor is correct the jazz and ballad writers are beginning to amuse the various studios. It is said that they feel they cannot write until they get an inspiration—until the muse is kind to them. It is a little difficult to believe one needs a divine inspiration for most of the theme songs interpolated in the singies. But reports—maybe from green eyed monsters—are that the song writers sit around in a pose or daze waiting to create masterpieces such as Hearts Aglow I Love You. They inform the executives, so it is said, that creative work is born of an inspiration, that it is not manufactured like a piece of machinery. Only, inspirations do not come to composers too often—they spring out of the fancy in a brain.

So the composers worry the producers who are paying them large salaries—producers do not pay them to wait for an inspiration, but to write songs. Supervisors may worry stars, scenarists and directors, but it is cer-

tain they will not hurry nor intimidate the tin-pan alley merchants. They will continue to wait for the divine muse.

\* \* \*

### Carewe in East

"Evangeline" synchronized and ready for release Edwin Carewe, producer-director has gone East, with his publicity representative, John LeRoy Johnston to outline the national exploitation for the picture. Mr. Carewe will spend a few days in New Orleans en route arranging for the world's premiere at the Saenger theatre, June 14. Dolores Del Rio will leave Hollywood June 10 to be present at this premiere. While in New York, Carewe will discuss new stories with Joseph M. Schenck.

\* \* \*

### 50 Films Planned for M-G-M Season

Between 50 and 55 pictures will be announced by M-G-M at the sales convention to open June 15 at the Drake, Chicago. The sessions will be in charge of Felix Feist, general sales manager of the company and are expected to continue for approximately one week.

\* \* \*

### New Mart Play

The Theatre Mart will present "California," a new comedy drama in three acts by June Terry and Elaine Sweet. "California" opens on Monday evening June 17th and runs the remainder of the week.

The cast includes John Francis Dolan from New York, Clarice Wynn from London stage; A. Boyd Mewborn, Jack Leyton Leigh, Betty Baker, Earl McCarthy, Noreen Gammill, Francis Carroll, Gaylord Von Baron. Ably directed by J. Leyton Leigh assisted by Tom Henderson.

\* \* \*

### Al Green Signed For New Film

Al Green will next direct George Arliss in "Deseruli" for Warner Bros. Al Green is cutting "The Green Goddess," which he directed, with George Arliss in the leading role.



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## The Talkie Situation In London

London.—There seems to be no end to the discussion of the future of the stage vis-a-vis the talking film. It is amusing to hear what some actors have to say on these subjects, those who are talking film-shy being just now rather prominent. Mr. Fred Terry, the actor-manager, described a recent film as "a horrible, grating, grunting noise which is called a talking film."

C. B. Cochran, however, declared that the remedy was not to beat the big drum and crowd on another hundred extras and paint another acre of canvas, but to concentrate more on the play of ideas.

At a lunch given to Henry Warner it was hoped that something of importance might be said, but Mr. Warner himself was the only person who said anything worth while. He seems to regard the talking pictures rather in the light of a stimulant to the film industry than as a rival to the theatre; for it appears that, like the stage, the films were coming on lean days.

"There were no profits coming to us from the silent films and we were going to cash in," he said. "The talking picture holds the promise of bringing people back to the films."

"The Letter" is running at the moment and is certainly delivering satisfaction so far as the new technique is concerned. In the scene where the woman tells her story in court, the reproduction of sound is a purer recording quality than has so far been heard here.

In the Wembley studios of Britain Sound Productions a British talking film is being made. This was the first British company to leap into the audible picture fray, and now that they are in it they are not meeting with nearly so many difficulties as they anticipated. "The Unwritten Law," featuring Ion Swinley, is the name of this new production. It is being directed by Sinclair Hill, who, unlike other directors here, has no doubts regarding the future of the talking film.

"Talking films," he said, "are bound to be the rage for at least

two years. They are wonderfully interesting."

Seymour Hicks has also joined the merry throng of microphone actors. He has signed a contract to produce and act in British talking films. He says:

"I have tremendous faith in the talking films. To go into the business now is much the same thing as it must have been to go into the silent films twenty years ago. I do not look upon talking films as rivals of the stage. They are a separate medium, and it would be nonsense to say that any sort of film can compete with living flesh and blood." He added that two pictures he may make are "The Catch of the Season" from the musical play, and "Sleeping Partners."

Elstree is to be the home of yet another British film firm—the British and Dominions Corporation, Ltd., whose production chief, Herbert Wilcox, made the audible offering, "Black Shadows," in Hollywood, which will be presented to the trade here next week.—*James N. Stephens in N. Y. Times.*

\* \* \*

### Universal Convention

At K. C. on June 15

The Universal sales conventions open this year in Kansas City on June 15 at the Baltimore Hotel. Exchange managers and other exchange executives from all Western offices, including Western Canada, will attend the four-day session.

\* \* \*

### Balshofer with Radiotone

Fred J. Balshofer has taken over the Marshal Neilan studios in Hollywood for the Radiotone Pictures Corp., it is reported. The studio is being made sound-proof and a recording equipment installed. Balshofer expects to start his first production the later part of June. This will be released by the independent market.

\* \* \*

### Lupino Lane with Lasky

Lupino Lane having completed his series of comedies for Educational and has signed with Paramount to play a featured role in "The Love Parade," Ernst Lubitsch will direct.

## RKO Finishes Sound Stage

The fourth sound-proof stage on the Radio Pictures lot is now ready for use, according to an announcement by Charles E. Sullivan, vice-president of RKO studios.

An army of workmen, laboring day and night, is putting the finishing touches to the structure, which is a part of a half-million dollar expansion program launched by Radio Pictures. In addition to housing the new sound-proof stage, the building will include numerous offices and adjuncts to sound recording.

The structure measures 72 by 175 feet, the soundproof stage occupying a floor space of 71 by 100 feet, while the remainder is divided into two floors, the major portion of the upper floor serving as quarters for music and lyric writers furnishing theme songs and scores for Radio Pictures.

\* \* \*

### Kaley to Make Talkies

Chicago.—Charles Kaley, orchestra leader who alternates between the Granada and the Marbro, will leave in two weeks for Hollywood to make some talkies for the M-G-M studio. Kaley has a contract with the Marks Bros., that has three more years to run. This has been taken over by the M-G-M who in turn gave Kaley a five year contract.

\* \* \*

## Tully Loses Plagiarism Suit

New York—The play, "Bird of Paradise," subject of litigation for 17 years, has been found a plagiarism.

Supreme Court Justice McGoldrick yesterday handed down a decision awarding Mrs. Grace A. Fendler, writer, damages of \$608,361 against Richard Walton Tully, playwright, and \$173,529 against Oliver Morosco, producer.

Mrs. Fendler, who first sued in 1912, charged Tully's "Bird of Paradise" was plagiarized from her play "In Hawaii."

## Pacent Beats Western Electric In Sound Suit

The suit brought by Western Electric Company, Inc., Electrical Research Products, Inc. and American Telephone and Telegraph Company against the Pacent Reproducer Corporation and the Pacent Electric Company, Inc., of New York City, was dismissed when Judge William Bondy of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York granted a motion made by the counsel for the defendants to dismiss the bill of complaint on the ground that the Western Electric Company and Electrical Research Products, Inc., had no legal interest in the patents and were not proper parties plaintiff.

The motion granted in New York also directly affects the suit against the Broadway theatre, Buffalo New York, owned by Sol Wallerstein and also sued by the telephone-talkie group for alleged patent infringement through the use of Pacent Reproducer System. Under an agreement of attorneys for both sides it was stipulated that the action by the case against Pacent Reproducer Corporation. The motion to dismiss therefore applies automatically to the exhibitors' suit brought by the Western Electric Company. This was the suit brought by the group against a single independent exhibitor to test the exhibitor's right to use equipment which Western Electric claims infringed patents.

\* \* \*

### Dix Starting Work for Radio Within 60 Days

While no vehicle has been selected as yet, Richard Dix is slated to begin work under his Radio Pictures contract within the next 60 days.

\* \* \*

### Frank Craven to RKO

Frank Craven will have the featured role in RKO's "The Very Idea," a farce produced on Broadway several seasons ago. Craven may direct the audifilm.



# EDWARD LAEMMLE

Directing

The All Dialogue Production of

“The Drake Case”

A UNIVERSAL PICTURE

# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

**"WHERE EAST IS EAST,"** an M-G-M production.

Directed by Tod Browning.

Screen story by Tod Browning and Sinclair Drago.

Starring Lon Chaney; featuring Estelle Taylor, Lupe Velez and Lloyd Hughes.

**Critical Viewpoint:**

"Where East is East" is not up to the regular Chaney-Browning combination. Not only does it fail to give Lon Chaney the opportunity to prove how ambidextrous he can be, or how cleverly he can disguise himself, but the picture fails to hold interest. It is impossible to believe the story, so it never gets under the skin. And we wonder, are all half-caste ladies as bad as they are painted in the movies?

This photoplay proves that the heavy is more interesting to audiences than heroes or heroines. Lon Chaney generally plays the bad man, this time he is the devoted papa and Estelle Taylor the evil one. Attention centers on Estelle Taylor, leaving Chaney in the background. Of course we know Miss Taylor would be killed by the gorilla when Chaney told her the gorilla still hated her for being cruel to it years before the picture started. As the role of the young lover is written, he wasn't worth saving for the volataile Lupe Velez—one felt he would be just as susceptible to the next attractive woman who came into his life.

Lon Chaney fans will no doubt find his performance interesting, although it is less gruesome than the cripples he generally portrays.

Estelle Taylor is attractive to the eye as well as being the outstanding player in the production. Whenever Miss Taylor is given the opportunity she walks away with the picture. Yet she is seen far too infrequently on the screen.

Lupe Velez does some good work as the daughter. Vivid as she is though, Miss Taylor takes the honors of the cinema.

Lloyd Hughes had an unsympathetic role of a weakling—a difficult handicap to overcome.

**Box Office Angle:**

"Where East is East" should attract the numerous Chaney fans but they will probably be disappointed in the story. The atmosphere of Indio-China is impressive, but a note of artificiality detracts from the photoplay.

—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

**DeMonde Loaned to Harold Lloyd**

Albert DeMonde has been borrowed from Universal by the Harold Lloyd Corp. to prepare the dialogues for the comedian's latest picture "Welcome Dangler."

\* \* \*

**"Titlelogue Writer"**

Paul Perez, First National's "Mark Twain," now writing the titles for "Careers," has coined a new adjective for himself: "Titlelogue Writer," a contraction meaning that Paul's versatility combines titles and dialogue.

\* \* \*

**233 Starts Construction On Auditorium July 1**

Construction bids having been asked the Two Thirty Three Club will break ground, July 1, for its new \$100,000 thousand seat auditorium to be erected on the present club site at Yucca and McCadden, Hollywood. At the spring ceremonial of May 29, forty-eight candidates were initiated and 233 began its sixth year with more than 2,000 members. The fourth annual 233 picnic will be held June 30 at Whiting Woods, LaCrescenta, according to Pres. Rex B. Goodcell.

\* \* \*

**Higgin Busy On New Pathe Film**

Howard Higgin is preparing on the dialogues and script of "Painted Desert," which he will also direct as his next feature production for Pathe.

**"THE GLAD RAG DOLL,"** a Warner Bros. production.

Directed by Michael Curtiz.

Screen story by Graham Baker.

Starring Dolores Costello; featuring Ralph Graves, Albert Gran, Audrey Ferris, Claude Gillingwater and Arthur Rankin.

**Critical Viewpoint:**

Ever since "The Gold Digger," chorus girls have fallen in love with stern uncles and brothers who have disapproved of them at the beginning of the story. Of course the stern uncles and brothers return the affection and all seems to end happily at the fade-out. Well, the little glad rag doll is no exception to this rule.

How the ho-poilois will reveal in this picture interpretation of society. Instead of being aristocratic, they act like a set of newly rich that even the ladies of a Scandals company would classify as riff raff. And the masses certainly like to feel that so-called good families have their skeletons.

While the story is trashy and not at all realistic, it is the type of cinema that is generally popular. It gives Miss Costello the opportunity to wear some becoming gowns.

As this reviewer remembers Dolores Costello's voice in "Glorious Betsy," a remarkable change and improvement has been shown orally. In fact Mrs. John Barrymore has gone the way I expect most of the film players go—English. In a year from now the stars who became famous in silent films will be talking so British, the English consul will have to get an interpretator. However, Dolores Costello is so exquisite it is a pleasure to see her. And with a voice that blends with her appearance, this actress should hold her own.

Ralph Graves plays the hero—he is not especially good. Albert Gran is the comedy relief and he contrives to get many laughs. Arthur Rankin is pleasing as the young brother.

The other characters are not of sufficient importance to register with the spectators.

**Box Office Angle:**

The title "The Glad Rag Doll" should attract in neighborhood theatres and small towns. The picture should please the average audience. Where Dolores Costello is popular, it will not disappoint.

—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

**Coldewey Busy**

Anthony Coldewey is supervising the production of "So Long Letty" for Warner Bros.

\* \* \*

**Bergerman Named Laemmle Assistant**

Stanley Bergerman has been appointed assistant to Carl Laemmle, president of Universal Pictures Corporation, it was announced by that organization this week. Bergerman has resigned his position as an official of the May Company in order to assume his new duties.

\* \* \*

**Brown at F. N.**

Joe E. Brown has completed his part in "Song of the West" and is now playing in "Sally" at First National.

\* \* \*

**Langdon Joins Roach Forces**

Harry Langdon has joined the Hal Roach comedy forces.

He has signed a three year contract with Mr. Roach to make a series of all-talking two-reelers.

The Langdon production unit will replace the All-Star organization which has been in operation at the Roach studios. Mr. Roach will personally direct Langdon, making one picture each month.

Mr. Langdon recently completed a series of feature-length comedies for First National.

A graduate of the speaking stage, Mr. Langdon passed an excellent voice test and is all set for the talkies.



# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

**"BURLESQUE,"** a Paramount production.

Directed by John Cromwell and Eddie Sutherland.

Adapted by John Manker Watters.

Cast: Hal Skelley, Nancy Carroll, Ralph Theodore, Charles Brown, Dorothy Revier, Al St. John, George Irving, Jimmy Quinn and others.

A preview.

*Critical Viewpoint:*

Paramount has turned out an excellent piece of photodrama as well as a fine bit of entertainment in this film version of the noted stage play. The production is to be known under the new title of "The Dance of Life," which means nothing at all as far as the picture is concerned, but Paramount probably adopted it for sound commercial reasons. Anyway, we will give them the benefit of the doubt.

This is highly enjoyable from beginning to end. It looks like a workmanship job in every department. The story opens in an interesting manner and moves along smoothly and rapidly without the usual drags which mark a film that is supposed to be "big."

The directors, John Cromwell and Edward Sutherland undoubtedly deserve commendation for the way in which they have handled the play. They appear to have milked every situation for everything it is worth and in some respects have even improved on the original opera. David C. Selznick, credited with supervision, must also come in for a measure of praise for the quality of the production as a whole.

Naturally, Hal Skelley and Nancy Carroll, in the two leading roles, walk away with the picture. Their work is exceptional and it is difficult to say which will receive the most applause from public and critics.

The producers have stressed the human side of "Burlesque" and in this they made a wise decision. The stage numbers, however, are a decided enhancement to the production, bringing not only unforced humor but important entertainment values. The "beef trust" chorus girls are presented in all their

ancient glory and with a realism that is certain to kindle fond memories of the good old days of the wheel circuits.

The chief deficiency of "Burlesque" lies in the fact that certain incidents in the plot seem a bit unconvincing or far fetched. At least, they are not sufficiently explained. These flaws were cleverly covered up in the original play. Then there is the fact that between acts in a foot-light drama the audience forgets many points—much as cinema audiences overlooked certain inconsistencies in the serials of old. When the plot is unfolded in straight continuity, however, these defects come to the surface. Luckily, in the present instance, they are not important enough to seriously detract from the film.

*Box Office Angle:*

In spite of the splendid qualities of "Burlesque," I have my doubts in regards to its unqualified success as a \$2 road show. It should go over big in many cities and prove a good all-around attraction. Nevertheless it seems to lack many of the essentials that are necessary to keep a film in the \$2 class over a long road show booking.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

**Romberg, Hammerstein**

Signed by Warner Bros.

Warner Brothers have engaged Sigmund Romberg, and Oscar Hammerstein 2d, for their exclusive services in the composition of musical works for more than one year. The two will leave for Hollywood shortly.

\* \* \*

**Directs McCormack**

Frank Borzage will direct John McCormack, famous Irish tenor, in his forthcoming Fox Movietone picture.

**"THE EXALTED FLAPPER,"** a Fox production.

Directed by Wm. Tingling.

Scenario by Matt Taylor.

Cast: Sue Carol, Barry Norton, Irene Rich, Albert Conti, Sylvia Fields.

A preview.

*Critical Viewpoint:*

A nicely mounted and handled production but the story was too much to overcome. "The Exalted Flapper" is another one of those mythical kingdom yarns that first saw the light of day when one-reelers were in their prime but went out of date with Harold McGrath.

The action opens with a take off on Queen Marie of Romania. The heroine, played by Sue Carol, is a princess en tour in America with her mother, the Queen, who is seeking finances. She gets a load of American jazz and passes the news around to her country folk. The diplomats of her Kingdom decide that she must marry the prince of a neighboring kingdom for political purposes. In the meantime she meets a certain young sheik who in reality is the very same prince in disguise, incognito, in simple homespun and all that sort of thing, and does she fall for him? Well, turn to movie plot No. 6 and you can work out the whole thing for yourself, even to her embarrassment when on her wedding day she finds that the hated prince from the neighboring province is none other than the same bozo she has been necking with incognito in the garden.

There are some light and subtle touches injected but they are not sufficient to offset the many other faults of the picture. For the most part the film is dull, draggy and inexcusable. As a whole "The Exalted Flapper" is so impossible that even the Johns and Marys will never believe it. The story will appeal more to the women folk, because of its romantic angle, but it is even too stale to give even the femmes much of a thrill.

An attempt is made to pep up the production with an air of

jazziness. This gets a few laughs but fails to redeem the truthness of the opus to any important degree.

There is also a last minute effort to inject some excitement into the production by throwing a couple of dummies or something off a cliff, but by this time the audience has grown so dizzy that nothing matters and even a technicolor sequence couldn't save it.

At the preview of this production the audience began to walk out about the third reel and before the picture was through it began to look as though a fire had broken out somewhere in the theatre.

*Box Office Angle:*

If any of you exhibitors have already bought this picture and are obligated to run it, I would advise you to give away watches or \$5 gold pieces to your customers so they will go home satisfied.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

**Back to Vode**

Clark and McCullough, who have been featured in Fox-Movietone shorts, are returning to the vaudeville stage.

\* \* \*

M-G-M will remake "The Sin Flood," as a talker. The picture was made several years ago in silent form by Goldwyn.

\* \* \*

**Completes Script**

Robert Carr is putting the last touches on the scenario and script of "Why Leave Home?" a new title chosen for the talking-singing version of "Cradle Snatchers."

\* \* \*

**"Out of the Night"**

**New King Production**

Henry King's next production for Inspiration-Halperin will be "Out of the Night," from Rita Johnson Young's story.

# A \$2 Attraction On Broadway!

## "Father and Son"

A Columbia Talkie

*Adaptation and Continuity*

*By*

# Jack Townley

[[P.O. Box 246, Hollywood]]  
[[or Edward Small Office]]

*Here's what the critics say:*

VARIETY—

"Okay for first runs easily . . . So craftily has the story been dove-tailed, and so shrewdly has it been developed, the whole thing unfolds naturally and smoothly . . . The story stands up on its merits as admirable picture material, excellent in treatment. . . carries a sentimental appeal in somewhat the same spirit that gave 'Sorrell and Son' its charm."

N. Y. WORLD—

"'Father and Son' is a commendable example of what can be done provided a little intelligence and imagination are expended."



**10c**

*News, Reviews,  
Opinions*

*Published Every  
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**10c**

# THE FILM MERCURY

**VERITAS**



**VINCIT**

Vol. 10, No. 2  
Twenty-Four Pages

HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA  
FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 1929

*Edited by*  
**TAMAR LANE**

## **Producers Underestimate The Power Of Equity**

**Wm. Fox Now Fighting Big Odds**

**Hits And Flops Of Broadway**

**Glazer Prominent In News**

**Some Knocks And Boosts**

**Carl Laemmle Jr. Now Reigns At "U"**

**More Mergers To Come**

## **REVIEWS**

**"Dangerous Curves"**

**"Sophomore"**

**"Paris Bound"**

**"Girl Trouble"**

# TAMAR LANE

## SISTROM NOW BIG BOSS AT PATHE

Is Pathe to be an independent progressive in the production and distribution of talking pictures or is it to be merely a pawn in the chess game of finance to be used in the operation of Kennedy and his Wall St. affiliations?

That is the question which the film industry wants to know.

As soon as I learned of Benjamin Glazer's retirement from Pathe it seemed logical that William Sistrom undoubtedly would be the man to carry on with Joe Kennedy's plans for Pathe's production future.

Interviewing Bill Sistrom might be entitled "Journalist's Heartbreak." Expecting J. P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller (and I understand Bill Sistrom has the same difficulty in parting with real money), the Welsh executive is the toughest man in the world to get a story out of.

Sistrom's career in the business has been marked by silent service to other well exploited personalities. They say that he gave twenty years of the job of running Universal City in its early life. Yet Bill Sistrom is mellow when he tells a good natured anecdote or two about old Uncle Carl. He was also manager for a period of William Randolph Hearst's movie enterprise. In fact he is credited with being the man who prevented W.R.H. from scrapping "Humoresque."

The story runs that he offered to buy the unfinished picture and complete it himself, upon which Hearst with greater confidence went ahead with the film to its ultimate sensational success. Sistrom has survived many regimes since he came over to Culver City from the Metropolitan studio to join Cecil B. DeMille.

There is great shrewdness, tenacity and farsightedness in Sistrom's make-up. The one quality perhaps, he has not yet sufficiently exhibited to gain him a high place among the movie

elect is that of producing showmanship. It may be his business training (he was, before joining Carl Laemmle, in the Western Electric plant at Schenectady), that pulls him back from undertakings that to the born showman appear as necessary progressive measures. Or it may be his racial conservativeness. In any event he seems to reflect Kennedy's policies in relation to Pathe's upbringing.

For the first time in his tenure at what is now the Pathe Studio Sistrom is in full charge of production. It will be interesting to note how he will function as a producing boss differentiated from business management. The Film Mercury wishes him well and will devote, as the occasion warrants, additional space in the future to analysis of Pathe's position and progress.

\* \* \*

## Lon Young Lining Up Talkie Series

Long Young, independent producer, is reported to be lining up on a new series of talking features, to be produced at Tec-Art studios.

Young, who recently completed a series for Chesterfield, is rated as one of the most competent producers in the independent field and is noted for the fact that he supervises every detail of his production from story preparation to final editing.

\* \* \*

## Casey Robinson Preparing at M-G-M

Casey Robinson, young director, whose career has evoked comment in the industry, is completing his original story which is to be his first directorial assignment for M-G-M. Title and details not divulged.

\* \* \*

Recognizing the splendid record made by Howard Estabrook, Paramount executives have signed the well known scenarist to a new contract. Two of Estabrook's specials are now showing in New York, "She Goes to War" and "Four Feathers."

## Gill Pratt Directs

### Dual Talkie Role

Gill Pratt has just completed the direction of the first dual role in talkies, a Lloyd Hamilton production. Mr. Pratt's next directorial assignment for Educational will be "A Southern Exposure" with Lloyd Hamilton and Ruth Hiatt. The story is by Gill Pratt.

\* \* \*

## Bert Ennis Elected for Guild Publicity

In connection with the recent election of officers of the Catholic Motion Picture Guild for the ensuing year, it is announced that Bert Ennis will again serve the Hollywood organization as chairman of the publicity committee. Ennis is at present in New York fulfilling a contract to write the dialogue for a musical feature starring Broadway favorites for the Weiss Brothers-De Forest combination.

## Paul Perez on "Twin Beds"

Paul Perez, Hollywood's busiest dialogue and title writer, is now at work on Alfred Santell's "Twin Beds." This is Perez' fifteenth consecutive titling assignment for First National.

In addition, Perez has written dialogue for four First National-Vitaphone features, and is at present engaged in writing a play for Fall production.

\* \* \*

## Higgin Preparing

Howard Higgin, director, is preparing the story, "Painted Desert," which he will direct for Pathe.

\* \* \*

## Jack Richardson in Colleen Moore Picture

Jack Richardson, veteran stage and screen character actor, is playing the role of an attorney in Colleen Moore's all Vitaphone production, "Footlights and Fools" at the First National studios.

# Gene Towne

[Fourth Year Under Contract]

# Drag

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First National—Vitaphone

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TAY GARNETT

*Directing*

"OH, YEAH?"

A William Sistrom Production

*with*

ROBERT ARMSTRONG and JAMES GLEASON

pathe

# THE FILM PARADE

*As seen by* **RICHARD WATTS JR.**

*Photoplay Editor, New York Herald-Tribune*

In my last sermon I endeavored to set down, for those who would bear with me, a brief and selected list of my cinema hates and devotions. It wasn't intended to be complete, but my hope was that it would supply a rough idea of a distinctly personal point of view. Since writing it, however, it has struck me that I neglected to record a few reactions that really should not have been omitted. Please forgive me, therefore, while I add the following revelations.

For one thing, that professional wildcat, Miss Lupe Velez, strikes me as being one of the most overrated, fatiguing and generally annoying people either as a player or a person, I have encountered in all my days of screen-going, and if she lasts over a year more as a popular cinema figure you must never accept my prophecies again.

Though when, in a rare moment of courage, I suggested that Mr. Rudy Vallee, the local orchestra leader and romantic crooner, was a vastly overrated young man, I was overwhelmed by an avalanche of lady correspondents, who insisted I was just jealous, my opinion of this current matinee idol is unchanged. Even if I am murdered for it, which seems likely, I still think Mr. Vallee is a commonplace performer who leads a commonplace orchestra.

The stories of the practical jokes that the merry Hollywood residents insist on playing on their guests, just to make them feel at home, hint at a native imbecility that makes one wonder why any one should ever want to visit such a ridiculous and boring city. When, in addition, you hear of the horrors of one of those self-conscious picture openings, which seems to be the high point of the Hollywood social life, you are inclined to wonder why the cinema capitol hasn't yet been abolished by an act of providence.

Miss Estelle Taylor's amaz-

ingly credible characterization of a foolish vampire role in Mr. Lon Chaney's "Where East is East" was such an exceptional piece of work that I can't understand why even the screen magnates don't realize she is one of the most striking of motion picture players.

Of all the current juveniles, the most believable, attractive and histrionically expert is Mr. Richard Arlen and I should think that Mr. "Buddy" Rogers and most of his professionally boyish colleagues would want to throw up their jobs in despair every time they see how sensibly he can play a youthful role.

Miss Lois Moran is, to me, such an engaging and entirely pleasant actress that I wish they would put her in pictures more bearable and suited to her talents than she has appeared in lately.

The first talking performance of the lyric Miss Billie Dove, in "Careers," even though it was mocked by the local critics as a ridiculous attempt at emotional acting, seemed to me a creditable portrayal, and I don't see why the objectors didn't recognize that the absurdities in the film were due to terrible dialogue, not the star's work.

The screen voices of Miss Clara Bow, in "The Wild Party," and Miss Corinne Griffith, in "Saturday's Children" hardly provided the most musical sounds of the seasons, but they were so genuine and unaffected and lacking in the prevalent elocution school manner that I would place them among the more pleasant discoveries of the talking pictures.

In their year and a half of existence, the talking pictures have followed the lines of development laid down so completely by the silent films, in their decades of life, as to suggest that they are already on the verge of reaching the same impasse that so abruptly stopped

the progress of the older medium.

"The Four Feathers," though too frank an amalgamation of the popular qualities of "Chang" and "Beau Geste" to be quite comfortable, was effective enough, in its silent way, to remind us how pleasant it used to be to drop in and see a non-dialogue motion picture. Somehow it was brought back to us that not more than a season and a half ago the pantomime cinema was decidedly on the verge of becoming something.

In speaking about the better ingenues recently I unaccountably forgot to mention Miss Josephine Dunn. She isn't exactly an expert actress yet, but a certain poignant simplicity which enables her to play tragic scenes honestly, and her ability to shift from heroines to heavies at will combine, with a very satisfactory beauty, to make her a screen personage.

Somehow I cannot get enthusiastic about Miss Fay Wray. Of course, she is a pretty young woman, but it has never struck me that she was particularly interesting either as an actress or a personality.

Miss Bebe Daniels is, I am sure, a distinctive personage of the screen, who is so obviously a grand person that it is easy to overlook such less obvious qualities as dramatic ability and her equipment to be one of the important comediennesses of her time. I trust that, under her new contract, she will get better pictures.

Mr. Richard Dix is one of the most likable of the film farceurs, but I don't see why that should make any one forget that, in "The Vanishing American" he offered one of the brilliant tragic portraits achieved by the motion pictures.

I wouldn't want to be quoted as saying that Miss Jeanne Eagels was a helpless young lady picked upon by evil foes,

but when she is loudly accused of being so temperamental that she won't even allow any one to touch her dog, merely because she put up a sign warning people that the animal had a bad temper, I begin to suspect she is a bit less untractable than her foes insist.

I think that Miss Alice White is the liveliest and shapeliest of newer cinema subrettes, and even if the local reviewers do denounce her as a terrible actress and a worse personality, I get considerable pleasure watching her on the screen.

\* \* \*

## Censors Ban U. S. Film

Paris.—French film censors have put a ban on the American film dealing with the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti, who were tried and electrocuted in the United States.

\* \* \*

## Sound for Cine Studios

Rome.—Installation of sound equipment at the Cine studio has already started. The studio belongs to Pittaluga.

\* \* \*

## Pathe Will Film

### "Greenwich Follies"

Pathe has arranged with Morris Green of Janes and Green, known as "Bohemians Inc." for the rights to film the famous "Greenwich Village Follies" as an all-talking and musical production to be made in colored motion pictures. It will be the tenth edition of the Follies, and will supplant for the season the usual annual stage presentation.

For years the "Greenwich Village Follies" has been a New York theatrical institution. The first edition was put on in the season of 1919-1920.

The Pathe production of the "Greenwich Village Follies" will include the best available Broadway talent of the same high standard as has characterized the "Follies" in the past.



*Albert De Mond*

Writing Dialogue

for

Harold Lloyd's

Latest Production

**"Welcome Danger"**

# Universal Plans \$12,000,000 Program

A \$12,000,000 program of pictures for the 1929-30 season is announced by Universal.

In announcing this schedule it was stated that the entire program will be dedicated to Mr. Carl Laemmle on his twentieth year as a producer and will be produced by Carl Laemmle Jr., in charge of all production at the Universal City studios.

Universal will produce 332 pictures, under the new program, ranging in length from 12-reel super productions to single reel comedies. These include three supers, six specials and 41 features, most of which will be all talking. Three super productions are listed for general release during the 1929-30 season, "Show Boat," "Broadway" and "The King of Jazz," the last starring Paul Whiteman, the orchestra leader, and directed by Paul Fejos.

Headed by "The Storm," Universal will produce six specials including "The Men in Her Life," by Warner Fabian, author of "The Wild Party" and "Flaming Youth;" "The Cohens and Kellys In Scotland" with George Sidney and Charlie Murray; "The Last Performance," by James Creelman, co-starring Conrad Veidt and Mary Philbin; "The Shannons of Broadway," James Gleason's stage hit, with Gleason and Lucille Webster Gleason; and "Tonight At Twelve," Owen Davis' stage play directed by Harry Pollard. Fabian's story, "The Men in Her Life" will be published as a novel by Boni and Liveright in November.

Seven stars will appear in a series of all talking pictures to be produced for the coming season by Universal. Laura La Plante will be starred in three of these, "Hold Your Man," "Soft Shoulders" and "Kiss Proof."

John Boles will be starred in two all musical pictures, "The Song of Passion" and "Moonlight Madness."

Joseph Schildkraut will appear as star in three, "The Man About Town," "The Bachelor

Husband" and "The Mississippi Gambler." Reginald Denney will star in two entitled "Embarrassing Moments" and "No, No, Napoleon!"

The blonde, exotic Mary Nolan will be starred in four talkies, "Mademoiselle Cayenne," "The Come On Girl," "Ladies In Love" and "Lipstick."

Glenn Tryon and Merna Kennedy, featured in "Broadway," will appear as a team in three pictures, "Barnum Was Right," "Anything Goes" and "The Times Square Kid." George Lewis and Barbara Kent will also appear as a team in "Flaming Daughters" and "Keep On Dancing."

There will be five all-star talking productions including "The Drake Case," a murder trial sensation; "The Climax," starring Mary Philbin, Edward Locke's famous stage play; "Girl Overboard"; "Brawn of the Sea" and "She Belongs to Me," by Paul Sydney.

Hoot Gibson will make eight productions, probably all in sound, entitled "Rodeo Days," "Hand 'em Over," "The Acre Rider," "The Montana Kid," "Howdy Cowboy!" "The Mounted Stranger," "The Long Trail," and "Galloping Winds."

Ken Maynard will also produce eight talking westerns for Universal release, "The Wagon Master," "Lucky Larkin," "Songs of the Saddle," "Hidden Valley," "Tall Timber," "The Lost Canyon," "The Trail of the Pack" and "Crimson Courage."

In addition to these announced features "Red" Grange, the galloping ghost of the gridiron, has been signed to do a college picture entitled "College Heroes" which is now being written. "College Love," a big special all talking and sound feature, will be released for the coming season.

Replacing the popular "Collegian" will be a series of 12 all dialogue two-reelers called "Sporting Youth." The Rooneys will appear in a series of 6 talking two-reelers. There will

also be a series of six Benny Rubin one reel talkies. There will be five chapter plays, all in both sound and silent versions, "Ace of Scotland Yard," "Tarzan the Tiger," "The Jade Box," "The Lightning Express" and "Terry of the Times."

The Universal news reel, marking the re-entry of Universal into this field of production after ten years, will start in July with two issues weekly.

In addition, there will be 40 two-reel comedies, 20 in sound and 20 silent, featuring Sid Saylor, Arthur Lake and "Sunny Jim"; 26 two-reel westerns; 13 "Pioneer Kid" pictures with Bobby Nelson; 26 Oswald animated cartoons and 25 single-reel comedies.

Universal Pictures Corporation started from the old "Imp" company, organized in 1909, the full name of which was the Independent Motion Picture Co. The first release of "Imp" and Carl Laemmle's first offering as

a producer was "Hiawatha," an 890 foot picture made in Fourteenth street in New York and at Minnehaha Falls near Minneapolis.

\* \* \*

**Jack Jungmeyer**

**Resigns with Pathe**

Pathe has taken up the option of Jack Jungmeyer. The former newspaper man is now preparing an original story for William Boyd and recently completed the screen play of Joseph Franklin Poland's original, "Big News," and collaborated on the dialogue. "Big News" is Alan Hale's first starring audifilm. Fred Newmeyer is the director.

\* \* \*

**In "Love Parade"**

Edgar Norton will be master of court ceremonies in "The Love Parade," Ernst Lubitsch's Paramount operetta. He joins Maurice Chevalier, Jeannette MacDonald, Lillian Roth, Lupino Lane and Lionel Belmore.

## Paul Perez



## Twin Beds

First  
National -  
Vitaphone

.... has completed  
tinting Mervyn Le  
Roy's "Broadway  
Babies" Starring  
Alice White. He is  
now titling Al San-  
tell's screen ver-  
sion of the stage  
success .....

Management  
Lichtig &  
Englander



**GLENN TRYON**

**STAR OF**

**'BROADWAY'**

**UNIVERSAL'S**

**SUPER PRODUCTION**

**NOW STARRING IN**

**'BARNUM WAS RIGHT'**

# Independent Theatres Being Killed Off

Chicago.—A special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Allied States Association of Motion Picture Exhibitors was held at the Blackstone Hotel, last week, to consider measures for the relief of the independent motion picture theatre owners who are being rapidly driven out of business by the exorbitant rentals now being charged for films and other unfair and oppressive tactics employed by the producers of such films.

Until recently the relations of the producers and theatre owners were those of seller and buyer, and the competition formerly existing between the producers served to protect the theatre owners against extortion. The producers are now so exclusively engaged in the exhibition of pictures through owned and affiliated houses that the independent theatre owners are no longer treated as customers, but as competitors, they claim. In such competition all advantages lie with the producers and these advantages are now being pressed to the utmost in what appears to be an effort finally to exterminate the independent houses.

The chief weapon being employed in this warfare of extermination is the price of film, more especially talking film. The public demand for talking films has been demonstrated, and the theatre owners are under pressure to meet this demand, without such films they cannot compete. The rentals demanded for talking films are, on an average, several hundred per cent above those formerly asked for the silent films, although there is no evidence that they cost more to produce. The argument that exorbitant rentals are necessary because of the limited distribution of these films (not all theatres being equipped to show them), is answered by the fact that distribution is now being retarded, even curtailed, by such rentals.

The unvarying testimony from all parts of the country is to the effect the independent owners of small and medium sized theatres are losing money due to the high overhead inci-

dent to displaying talking pictures and are being forced to sell out to the producers or close their doors. The consensus of opinions is that the overwhelming majority can not survive another season on the present basis, and that unless relief is promptly forthcoming, the producers will complete their conquest within a year.

Notwithstanding the admitted facts and the protests of the local and state associations, no producer has uttered a word of moderation and the situation is growing steadily worse.

It was the unanimous opinion of the directors present and represented that the exhibitors should support the bill introduced by Senator Smith W. Brookhart, of Iowa, to prevent the block booking, blind booking and arbitrary allocation of films to producers, controlled theatres, and to make unlawful the system of compulsory arbitration imposed by the producers on the exhibitors as a condition to the leasing of films.

The exhibitors recognize the force of the argument that industry troubles should be settled within the industry without government interference, but point out that there is no evidence of a willingness on the part of the producers to modify this in any degree, the condi-

tions under which the exhibitors are now being forced out of business. As the exhibitors view it, there is nothing in the Brookhart Bill that can possibly make matters worse so far as they are concerned, there is much that is calculated, to use the language of Senator Brookhart, "to preserve for the American people the remaining vestige of competition in the motion picture industry."

The directors have pledged themselves to a campaign to secure support for the measure and to defend it against the false and misleading propaganda issuing from producers organizations. An analysis of the bill from the standpoint of the exhibitors will be prepared by counsel and distributed to all exhibitors as an offset to a brief recently circulated by counsel for the so-called Hays Organization. Also a canvass will be made of the exhibitors to contact the work now being done by the film board of trade secretaries, exchange management and other producers agents.

\* \* \*

## LeMaire Comedy

George LeMaire is producing another all-talking comedy at Pathe's New York studio: "The Canvasser," featuring Frank Davis, Evelyn Knapp, Ted Leary and others.

## Signed for Music Score on Fox Film

Howard Jackson, arranger and conductor of music has been signed to act in this capacity for Fox's "Sunny Side Up," featuring Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrel. The original music was by DeSlyva Brown and Henderson.

Mr. Jackson has to his credit the score for "Hearts in Dixie," "Broadway," and recently completed the arranging and musical direction of the score for James Cruze, "The Great Garbo."

\* \* \*

## Jack Donovan is Starred

Jack Donovan has been signed by International Films to star in a picture called "Why Women Love," which is being directed by Defider Tek, a young Hungarian director, who is a recent arrival in this country.

The film is being made at Tec-Art Studios, and Jean Porter is leading lady, while Tiber Von Jany is playing the heavy role.

\* \* \*

## Insure Whiteman for \$1,000,000

One million dollars insurance has been placed on Paul Whiteman, jazz king, by Universal for protection during the production of Universal's super production "The King of Jazz" starring Whiteman.



## JACK RICHARDSON

*Character and Heavies*

in

James Cruze Production

## "THE GREAT GABBO"

Eric Von Stroheim

Morningside 12465



## Exhibitors to Fight Film Mergers

Chicago. — An official statement just issued by Abraham F. Myers, general counsel of the Allied States Association of Motion Picture Exhibitors, issued by authority of the Board of Directors, contains the following charges:

The directors have noted the growing tendency toward mergers among the producers which is rapidly narrowing the field of competition. The industry now is controlled by but a few interests and rumors are constantly heard of projected mergers which will bring the industry under the control of one or at most two, dominant interests. This the exhibitors believe would be ruinous to them and detrimental to the public as well, in that it would mean the elimination of genius and ideas as well as purely economic competition.

The Board approved the action of the general counsel in protesting to responsible government agencies recent and prospective mergers, and authorized and directed him to use his best endeavors to secure protection against the further monopolizing of the industry.

A further subject of discussion was the price discrimination and other unfair and oppressive tactics practiced by producers in favor of owned and controlled theatres and against independents. It was asserted that the price and percentages demanded of the independent theatres are proportionately much higher than those demanded of affiliated houses, and that prompt payment is demanded of the independent, whereas the controlled houses are allowed to pay when it is convenient or when they have the money. It is obvious that the independent houses can not long withstand such competition.

It was agreed that members of exhibitors organizations affiliated with the Allied States Association should forward evidence of all such discriminating practices to the Chief Counsel of the Association in Washington, who was authorized to make such use of it by way of complaint to public authority, as the bringing of private actions, as may be necessary to protect exhibitors interests.

The general counsel of the Association was directed to lay before the appropriate agencies of the Government, both executive and legislative, all facts and circumstances tending to establish a common purpose on the part of the producers of photo plays to drive the independent theatres out of business, with a view of obtaining a broad investigation of industry conditions.

Included among the facts which exhibitors believe tend to prove the existence of such common purpose among the producers are the close affiliation of the latter through the Hays Organization; the growing concentration of control resulting from systematic mergers; the imposition on the exhibitors of a one-sided uniform contract and a coercive system of arbitration as a condition to obtaining films; the extensive building operations and acquisitions of independent theatres, the espionage and propaganda activities the film board secretaries, exchange managers and other agents directed against exhibitors interests and organizations, the exorbitant film rentals and oppressive and discriminatory practices.

\* \* \*

Gary Cooper will have the lead in "The Old Lady Shows Her Medals," James Whale to direct.

## Carl Laemmle, Jr., Now In Full Charge At Universal City

With the departure of Uncle Carl for Europe last Saturday, one of the biggest production drives in the history of Universal has been put in motion under command of Carl Laemmle Jr. The young Laemmle scion has assumed charge in name only, but is personally supervising and arranging the various matters and details in preparation for this important film schedule.

The film colony is watching the launching of Carl Laemmle Jr.'s Universal regime with keen interest. It had been predicted by many that Carl Laemmle Sr. would not turn operation of the studio over to Junior for several years to come, but Uncle Carl up and fooled them and turned complete operation of Universal City over to Junior on his twenty-first birthday.

Junior has a big task ahead of him—the road ahead is pav-

ed with many obstacles that will have to be overcome—and he is now bucking companies who have stronger programs than they have had for years. Probably no one is more aware of these facts than the young Universal head himself. In favor of Junior's regime at Universal City, it is to be noted that at least he is fortunate in taking the studio over when there is less deadwood, less overhead and less politics than at any time in recent years. This gives him a way better start than is usually awarded executives taking over the reins at a big studio; and it is generally believed that Junior will make every effort to keep politics, politicians and yes-men out of Universal City, not only for his own good but for the good of the organization. Junior has the chance of a lifetime and he seems bent on making the most of it. —TAMAR LANE.

## Why Jack Jevne Is Now "In The Money"

Not only has Jack Jevne done a few jobs for Pathe that gave freshness to the story "triangle." He also has written dialogue compatible with the high standards of William Siström and Benjamin Glazer

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# THE FILM MERCURY

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Subscription Rates: \$3 for 52 issues; \$2 for 26 issues anywhere in the United States and its Possessions. 25% surcharge on Canadian subscription. 50% surcharge on Foreign subscriptions.

Mercury Publishing Company will not be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, letters or photographs and all such material is received at the sender's risk.

FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 1929

## NEW MOVIE MENACE?

June 27, 1929.

Editor, Film Mercury:

Your readers might be interested in the plan of the Power Trust, so-called, in relation to the moving picture business. Here it is:

10,000 houses to be wired at a cost of \$15,000 per house. This makes a total of \$150,000,000 about eighty per cent of which is profit. This will more than pay for any investment or loans made in and to the picture producing companies.

A weekly fee to be charged against each wired house for the use of machines. This is called a synchronization fee, but it is really a royalty on patents and is all profit. It will run against every foot of film using sound—the feature picture, the news weekly, the comedy, the special numbers, even the trailer used to advertise the attraction for the coming week.

There will also be a number of charges against the companies in the making of pictures, charges for machines, royalty charges for their use, sharing charges on pictures which employ sound devices. It is not possible to figure it with the exactness of the theatres charges. But it will be a most substantial item.

Of course this means the elimination of the neighborhood and small town house. This is a loss to the humble citizen. The movies are his only source of amusement: he can afford no other. But—the fittest must survive.

Can the theatres of the country stand these charges and, in addition, pay increasingly heavier film rentals? Probably not. But give the astute gentlemen of the Power Trust this income for four or five years, and they will be indifferent to the fate of the picture business. They will have theirs. That's modern business. It's rather interesting.

Arthur Belden.

### Warner Bros. to Film Big Revue

Warner Bros. are to produce a special in which all of their headliners will participate, including John Barrymore, Al Jolson, Ted Lewis, Irene Bordoni, Dolores Costello, etc.

\* \* \*

### Olcott Returns from Europe

Director Sidney Olcott has returned from an extended European trip and has signed with an English company to make a series of sound and silent films. Olcott will be in Hollywood this week and will then depart for England to start production.

### "Front Page" Hughes' Next

"The Front Page" will be the next Howard Hughes' screen presentation for Caddo Prods. This newspaper play will be all talking. Cast or director have not been selected yet.

\* \* \*

### Short Classics Sold To English Concern

The Short Story Film Classics directed by Frank P. Donovan, have been sold to an English producer-distributing organization, it is reported. They include "The Necklace," "The District Doctor" and "The Mystery Girl," all synchronized and made in Hollywood.

## Consolidated After Color Process

The Consolidated Laboratory outfit is reported to be on the hunt for a color film process with which to buck Technicolor. Technicolor is now doing a great deal of color work and Consolidated is anxious to cut in on it and maintain its leadership in the laboratory game.

Consolidated recently bought up the Bennett Laboratory, its last important competitor in the black and white field, although no official announcement has been made about the purchase of Bennett's.

This now gives Consolidated a more complete monopoly than ever before in the laboratory business. Roy Davidge still remains in business in Hollywood, but Davidge specializes in high grade first prints only and does

### James Gruen to Adapt "Night Parade"

James Gruen has been signed by RKO to write the adaptation and script of "Night Parade," known as a stage play under the title "Ringside." Original play written by Hy Dabb, George K. Abbott and Ted Parmore.

\* \* \*

### Poirier to Produce "Cain"

Paris—Leon Poirier, producer of "Verdun" will produce "Cain" with Thomy Bourdelle in the lead. The picture will be made in Madagascar.

not interfere with Consolidated's release print work. Davidge has his own following that will not go anywhere else.

It is also reported that coincident with the absorbing of the Bennett Laboratory, Consolidated may put into effect an increase in laboratory prices to the studios.

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# Hits and Flops of Broadway

## The Hits

The past theatrical year on Broadway is generally rated as having been one of the worst in many seasons. The flops greatly outnumbered the hits.

Among the plays considered as hits of the 1928-1929 New York season are:

<b>Vanities</b>	<b>Congal</b>
<b>Front Page</b>	<b>Perfect Alibi</b>
<b>Good Boy</b>	<b>Age of Innocence</b>
<b>The High Road</b>	<b>Whoopee</b>
<b>New Moon</b>	<b>Caprice</b>
<b>Little Accident</b>	<b>Follow Thru</b>
<b>Paris</b>	<b>Street Scene</b>
<b>Courage</b>	<b>Pleasure Bound</b>
<b>Hold Everything</b>	<b>Let Us Be Gay</b>
<b>Three Cheers</b>	<b>Journey's End</b>
<b>Animal Crackers</b>	<b>Bird in Hand</b>
<b>This Year of Grace</b>	<b>The Little Show</b>
<b>Holiday</b>	<b>Marriage Bed</b>
<b>Gentlemen of the Press</b>	<b>Kibitzer</b>
<b>Jarnegan</b>	<b>Jealousy</b>

## Record of Runs

Here is a list of the various shows that opened and the number of performances given:

Be Your Age.....32	Young Alexander ..... 7
The Big Fight.....31	Marry the Man..... 7
Revolt .....30	Chippies ..... 6
The Command Performance 30	Solitaire ..... 4
The Broken Chain.....30	Pleasure Man ..... 3
The Tenth Man.....29	The Cherry Orchard.....63
Gods of the Lightning.....29	Peter Pan .....48
Girl Trouble.....28	The Would-Be Gentleman.....34
By Request.....28	Katerina .....19
The Lady Lies.....24	L'Invitation au Voyage.....19
The Sacred Flame.....24	The Lady from Alfaceque.....17
The Common Sin.....24	The Cradle Song.....13
Precious .....24	Hedda Gabler.....11
Adventure .....24	The Good Hope..... 7
Adventure .....24	These Few Ashes.....37
Merry Andrew .....24	The Subway .....36
Before You're Twenty-five..24	Hot Water .....33
Security .....24	All the King's Men.....33
The Jade God.....24	The Sea Gull.....33
The Come-on Man.....24	Paolo and Francesca .....18
The Great Power.....23	Stepping Out .....16
Caravan .....22	Trapped .....16
Fast Life.....21	Potiphar's Wife .....16
Carnival .....21	The Money Lender.....16
The Man With Red Hair.....20	The Town's Woman.....16
The Lady of the Orchids.....20	Falstaff .....15
He Walked in Her Sleep.....20	The Phantom Lover.....15
Hotbed .....19	Vermont .....15
Rockbound .....19	Back Seat Drivers.....15
Back Here ..... 8	Chinese O'Neill .....14
The Unknown Warrior..... 8	The Vegetable .....13
The Street Wolf..... 8	Judas .....12
Decision ..... 8	Tomorrow .....11
The First Law..... 8	The Skyrocket .....11
Playing With Love..... 8	Buckaroo ..... 9
Sakura ..... 7	Three ..... 8

These Days ..... 8	The Big Pond.....47
The K Guy ..... 8	Possession .....47
The Front Page.....282	Elmer Gantry .....44
Courage .....277	Straight Thru the Door.....44
Little Accident .....273	Mystery Square .....44
The Perfect Alibi.....234	Crashing Through .....40
Holiday (27).....222	Flight .....41
The Age of Innocence.....212	Elmer the Great .....40
Paris .....195	When Cummlies Played.....40
Street Scene .....185	Indiscretion .....40
Brothers .....185	Olympia .....39
Mima .....180	Sign of the Leopard.....39
A Most Immoral Lady.....161	House Ungarded .....39
The High Road.....146	Cafe de Danse .....39
Jarnegan .....138	Congratulations .....39
This Thing Called Love.....138	He Understood Women.....38
Congai .....137	Ringside .....37
Jealousy .....136	The Lady from the Sea.....24
That Ferguson Family.....130	Under the Gaslight.....23
Gentlemen of the Press.....128	The Octoroon ..... 7
Let Us Be Gay.....128	Syrano de Bergerac.....153
Kibitzer .....120	The Light of Asia.....23
Night Hostess .....117	An Enemy of the People.....16
She Got What She Wanted .....112	Caponsacchi .....16
My Girl Friday.....112	Hold Everything .....274
Relations .....105	Good Boy .....252
Meet the Prince..... 96	Three Cheers .....211
Poppa ..... 95	Whoopee .....207
Serena Blandish ..... 95	Animal Crackers .....191
Harlem ..... 94	Hello, Daddy .....183
The Kingdom of God..... 93	Lady Fingers .....133
Young Love ..... 92	Billie .....112
Machinal .....12	Fioretta .....111
The Grey Fox..... 89	The Houseboat on the Styx .....163
Journey's End .....83	Spring is Here.....96
The Whispering Gallery.....81	Helo, Yourself .....87
The War Song.....80	Luckee Girl .....81
Gang War .....79	Just a Minute .....80
Goin' Home .....76	Boom Boom .....72
Exceeding Small .....73	Treasure Girl .....68
Zeppelin .....72	Ups-A-Daisy .....64
The Marriage Bed.....72	Cross My Heart.....64
The Jealous Moon.....71	Angela .....41
Bird in Hand.....69	Chee-Chee .....31
Tin Pan Alley.....68	Rainbow .....30
The On Call Girl.....67	Polly .....15
The Guinea Pig.....64	The Red Robe .....179
Gypsy .....64	Music in May .....72
The Squealer .....64	Earl Carroll's Vanities.....200
Eva the Fifth .....63	This Year of Grace.....161
Jonesy .....63	Pleasure Bound .....120
Mr. Money Penny .....62	The Little Show.....39
Heavy Traffic .....61	The Grad Street Follies.....37
The Lido Girl.....60	Ned Wayburn's Gambols .....31
Tonight at Twelve.....58	A Night in Venice .....16
The Song Writer.....57	New Americana .....12
One Way Street.....56	Americana ..... 7
The Love Duel.....56	Messin' Around .....33
Conflict .....53	Deep Harlem ..... 8
Lady Dedlock .....50	Black Scandals ..... 7
A Play Without a Name.....49	Pansy ..... 3
Guns .....48	S. S. Glencairn .....95



## Wm. Fox Fighting Big Odds

The gigantic battle between Wm. Fox and rival film interests predicted by the Film Mercury many months ago is now in full swing. Not only is Fox confronted, in what might be a fight to the finish, by practically all of the film concerns, the Film Mercury learns on good authority that several of the biggest financial magnates in Wall Street are also lined up against Fox.

With his own Fox company now considerably strengthened by the acquisition of the M-G-M organization and various Loew theatres, Wm. Fox is now undoubtedly the biggest single power in the business, having usurped Zukor's supremacy, ostensibly at least.

Whether Fox can retain this distinction for long is open to question. Many have sought to pilfer Zukor's crown but none has ever succeeded in holding it permanently. Zukor now appears to be doing most of his

manouevering under cover while Fox is playing ball out in the open, so it is difficult to get an exact line on just how Zukor stands.

The battle for theatres is still raging. Fox is grabbing every possible house he can lay his hands on and so are Paramount, RKO and Warner Bros. It is only a matter now of a few months before there will be practically no such thing as an independent theatre, barring insignificant houses in unimportant towns.

While the odds appear to be stacked against Fox, he seems prepared to give them a big run for their money. Those apparently opposing Fox are Paramount, RKO, Warner-First National, United Artists. Fox has stolen a march on his rivals in several particulars and seems to have the best theatre lineup in the industry.

Over the long pull, however, with his rivals working more closely together every day, the odds appear against Fox to win.

## Editors Wanted for Good Jobs

The United States Civil Service announces the following competitive examination:

Applications for film editor (motion picture) must be on file with the Civil Service Commission at Washington, D. C., not later than July 17.

The examination is to fill a vacancy in the Extension Service, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and vacancies occurring in positions requiring similar qualifications for duty in Washington, D. C., or in the field.

The entrance salary ranges from 2,300 to 2,800 a year. Higher-salaried position are filled through promotion.

The duties are to prepare and edit educational motion picture scenarios dealing with various phases of agriculture, forestry, farm engineering and other subjects covered by the work of the Department of Agriculture; the direction, assembling, titling and cutting of films made on the basis of these scenarios or others

## Echevarria Directing "Cherchez La Femme"

Victor Echevarria is directing "Cherchez La Femme" for the Major Beaux Arts Theatre. Hampton Del Ruth is the author. Blanche Sweet is the star. Others in the cast are J. Anthony Smythe, Brady Cline, H. S. Northrup, Alta Allen, Miss Rose and Wilford Ballantyne. It opens July 2nd.

on like subjects, and, when occasion demands, the operation of a motion picture camera, with special reference to cinematography of insect life.

Competitors will not be required to report for examination at any place, but will be rated on their education, training, and experience, and on a thesis to be filed by the applicant.

Full information may be obtained from the United States Civil Service Commission at Washington, D. C., or from the secretary of the United States Civil Service Board of Examiners at the post office or custom-house in any city.

I wish to express my appreciation to Mr. William Sistrom

and Mr. Carl Hovey for the opportunity of aiding

Joseph Franklin Poland in the preparation of

a Pathe Special for the Talking Screen

Louis Stevens

### English Actor Succeeds In Hollywood Talkies

Shayle Gardner, celebrated English stage and screen star, has completed his first American talkie role in "Three Live Ghosts" for United Artists. In this production he will be seen in an interesting characterization of a Scotland Yard detective.

No sooner had this eminent actor completed his role in "Three Live Ghosts" when Warner Brothers signed him for the featured role of Dr. Williams in "Disraeli," George Arliss' starring vehicle.

Gardner became known to the American fans recently through his outstanding characterization of the ship-building peer in Rex Ingram's "Three Passions," the film that was produced at Nice and released by United Artists.

\* \* \*

### Possesses Linguistic Advantages for Talkies

Victor Varconi, who has been in London for the past two months studying to perfect his English, is the possessor of rare linguistic advantages for the talkies. He speaks five foreign languages—at least three perfectly—and now has succeeded in mastering the English language.

Varconi plans to be back in Hollywood or New York the first week in July to begin a new career as a talkie artist.

\* \* \*

### H. B. Warner Completes Three

H. B. Warner, who recently completed the role of Major Crespian in "The Green Goddess" for Warner Brothers, has one more Vitaphone production to make under his four picture contract with that studio. "The Gamblers" and "The Argyle Case" are the other two productions he has completed under this contract. Both pictures are now being edited for future release.

### Bodil Rosing May Go On Vaudeville Tour

Bodil Rosing, one of the screen's foremost character actresses, is seriously considering giving up her screen career temporarily in favor of a vaudeville tour throughout the east.

Miss Rosing is a former stage star of Copenhagen, Denmark. She also appeared in New York and Chicago in several stage successes. Her latest pictures are "Eternal Love" for United Artists, and "Broadway Babies" for First National.

\* \* \*

### Pat O'Malley Now A Prizefight Manager

Pat O'Malley, who made his talkie debut in the sensational talking picture "Alibi" for United Artists, essays an interesting role of a prizefight manager in "The Man I Love," now showing at the Paramount theatre.

\* \* \*

### Joan Bennett Busy

Joan Bennett, youngest, talented daughter of Richard Bennett, has started work in "Disraeli" in which she plays the feminine lead opposite George Arliss for Warner Brothers. This is her third talking picture assignment—quite a record for a little actress who only arrived in Hollywood a few short weeks ago to be Ronald Colman's leading lady in "Bulldog Drummond."

Miss Bennett finished her role in her second talking picture "Three Live Ghosts" for United Artists, just in time to begin work on her new picture for Warners.

\* \* \*

### Dorothy Gulliver to Free Lance

Dorothy Gulliver is nearing the end of her "Collegian Days." She expects to finish her last series of "The Collegians" by the first of July, when she will leave Universal to free lance.

\* \* \*

Luxurious Lingere—Haimoff's Vanity Fair on Hollywood Blvd. Adv.

## Will Disloyal Equity Members Profit?

It would be interesting to have a psychiatrist analyze the effect of the movies on stage actors and actresses. Somehow it just makes them go hay-wire. The huge sums of money they amass makes the players hoggish and selfish instead of mellow and sympathetic.

As the fortunes accumulate, the heads and stomachs grow fatter and the emotions harder. The big stars of the stage were well treated by theatrical producers because of their positions—but they loyally fought for the rights of their less fortunate fellow players. Some of the actors and actresses who fought in the strike and who profitted by the conditions of the strike—have turned traitor to Equity. They used Equity when it was necessary—and rejected it when they did not need it for their gain. Like all traitors they sold out for silver.

While I have no sympathy for those who have been disloyal to Equity, I have only contempt for those who broadcast their betrayal of this worthy cause. If they felt Equity was in the wrong, it did not necessitate their public announcements that the producers were treating players in a fine and fair manner. Perhaps in return their salaries were raised or executives patted them on the back and told them how nice they were. If these rewards compensated them for untruths and disloyalty, surely they have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage.

Stars who have earned from \$2,000 to \$8,000 a week for many years surely can afford to stand by struggling actors who do not always have enough to eat. If Equity wins this fight it is not right that the stars who have claimed through the dailies that they are satisfied with their lot, should benefit by the result. They should be permitted to work sixteen or eighteen hours a day—they like it so well.

I do know a few cases where players have signed the non-Equity contract because they were in dire straights. They did not sign because they would not stand up under the circum-

stances, but because there were people dependent upon them.

The Actors Equity News explains about a statement I made in the last issue of the Film Mercury "that Mr. Gilmore should not be in charge of the situation, but someone who knows the industry," that the council and many people in Hollywood are back of his attitude.

As to the outcome of the present move taken by Equity, I cannot see why this organization should loose. Through rejecting its proposals—which they will accept—producers are placing themselves in an uncomfortable position. Some directors are taking players they do not want—others are lamenting wondering when the differences will be settled. If the cameramen walk out, who will do their work? Executives could save themselves a lot of time and worry if they would stop being pigheaded and agree to the Equity contract.

It is reported that already two independent producers have agreed to Equity contracts. It will not be long before the big boys follow suit. And, we wonder how will the public knockers of Equity alibi themselves? Will the backslapping of executives bring them back their self respect? The same hand will knife them six months from now.

The remark of one executive that it will be the end of Equity or the end of picture companies recalls the statement by George Cohan that if Equity won, he would become an elevator boy—Equity won and George M. Cohan is still producing plays.

Now, let the writers get a little spunk back of them—sugar may catch more flies than vinegar—but it takes a little fight to catch film producers.

—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

### Mary Fabian in "Phantom of Opera"

In the synchronization of "The Phantom of the Opera" Mary Fabian of the Chicago Opera company played Marguerita in the Faust scene. Miss Fabian has been engaged for concerts at the Bowl this season.



# Film Mergers May Be Quiet But They're Not Dead Yet

Merger talk naming Paramount, R-K-O, United Artists and other big film companies has down considerably during the past few days. While this has established the idea in some circles that merger negotiations have been dropped for the time being, there is also the possibility that the present silence can be looked upon with suspicion and that in reality certain big mergers have already been completed and that they are being kept under cover. The Brookhart bill and various other agitations being launched against the so-called Movie trust, it is almost a certainty that no official announcement would be made concerning a major amalgamation even should it be completed. In all probability the big film moguls in association with the radio chiefs and financial powers have come to some

agreement regarding their various holdings and how they can be pooled together to their mutual advantage. Merely because there have been no big publicity blasts announcing that RCA, R-K-O, Paramount and other companies have been drawn together under one control does not mean that this has not happened. Under existing conditions in the film game, the powers that be would wish the various companies that are party to a merger to ostensibly retain their trade names and individuality until such a later date when they could come out in the open.

It is now definitely known that any deal between United Artists and Warner Bros. is off and that instead of this Paramount-United Artists tieup are not revealed, although an effort is being made to create the impression that Paramount is merely giving United Artists a

helping hand. That their affiliation of interests lies deeper than this can be taken for granted considering the large amount of money which Paramount is loaning to United Artists and the moral support it has pledged.

R-K-O and Paramount are already working together on the theatre question in various spots throughout this country and Canada, and if these two organizations are in harmony on the theatre question, which is perhaps the most important at the present moment, then they are also pulling together on other matters.

Nothing further has developed to show what interest Paramount has in Warner Bros.-First National, if any. The shifting of United Artists from a Warner Bros. merger to a Paramount tieup is looked upon as an "inside job" by many.

—TAMAR LANE.

## Wm. Beaudine Buys More Real Estate

Adding one of the choicest apartment house sites in Hollywood to his many real estate holdings, William Beaudine, yesterday purchased the northwest corner of Franklin and Gower streets. No price consideration is announced.

The deal was negotiated by Harry Depp, business manager for Beaudine, who represented both the director and Johnnie Green, from whom the property was purchased. At present occupied by a large frame house which is being used for club purposes, the site fronts 133 feet on Franklin Ave. and is 195 feet deep on Gower. Carmen Place bounds it on the other side.

Among the real estate properties which Beaudine, who is a contract director with First National studios, owns are holdings on Sunset Boulevard, Vine Street, Crescent Heights Boulevard and other Hollywood locations.

# JACK JUNGMEYER

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## 35 Films On First National Schedule

A. L. Rockett, in charge of production at First National-Vitaphone Studios, announces that thirty-five feature-length, all-dialogue pictures will be made at the big Burbank film plant during the coming year.

The thirty-five will all be in the "special" class, and the number includes no short subjects, news reels or five-reel pictures. The program will represent an expenditure of over \$15,000,000.

In addition to the famous stage stars already under contract, it is probable that others will be signed to add to the following notable group of stage and screen celebrities: Colleen Moore, Marilyn Miller, Richard Barthelmess, Corinne Griffith, Billie Dove, Irene Bordoni, Alice White, Dorothy Mackaill, Leatrice Joy, Lois Wilson, Jack Buchanan, Eddie Buzzell, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Loretta Young and James Ford.

These will be starred or featured in the thirty-five specials, many of which will group sev-

eral of the featured players. The 1929-30 program includes:

Colleen More in a story of theatrical atmosphere, "Footlights and Fools." Richard Barthelmess in two pictures, one of them "Son of the Gods," by Rex Beach. Corinne Griffith stars in two: "Lilies of the Field," and Fanny Hurst's "Back Pay."

Billie Dove in "Give This Girl a Hand," a Fanny Hurst story; and three others as yet untitled; Dorothy Mackaill in "Hard to Get" and "The Great Divide," stage plays; also "The Woman on the Jury" and "The Queen of Jazz."

Alice White stars in four pictures: "The Girl from Woolworth's," "Playing Around," "Sweet Mamma" and an untitled picture. Leatrice Joy will have four: "A Most Immoral Lady," "Furies," and two untitled films; Jack Mulhall and Lois Wilson will be paired in two pictures, "The Dark Swan" and "In the Next Room," and appear separately in two un-

## Luther Reed Will Direct "Rio Rita"

Luther Reed, associate producer of Radio Pictures will direct "Rio Rita." Rehearsals are under way. Bebe Daniels and John Boles already have started rehearsing for the leading roles.

titled films.

Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., who recently signed a long-term contract with the company, also does four: "The Careless Age," with Loretta Young; "Fast Life," "The Forward Pass" and "Spring Is Here." Miss Young is co-featured in these pictures.

The stage stars appear in the following specials: Marilyn Miller in "Sally;" Irene Bordoni in "Paris;" Bernice Claire in "No, No, Nannette," and an all-star cast in "The Song of the Flame." Eddie Buzzell in "Little Johnny Jones" with Sally O'Neil.

"The Isle of Lost Ships" and "Loose Angels" are all-star specials. Virginia Valli, Jason Robards and Noah Beery are featured in the former.

## Cook Gets Right to Make Talkie

New York.—Joe Cook, star of "Rain or Shine," will be allowed to make a talking picture, but restrictions are to be placed on the towns and cities in which it may be released by the film companies, according to a decision of the American Arbitration Society.

Jones and Green, producers of "Rain or Shine," held that Cook's contract with them banned him from performing for others while under their management.

The arbitrators held, however, that while Cook was bound by his contract not to give his services to anyone but Jones and Green, they saw no reason why Cook should not make a talkie while at liberty in the summer, providing it was not exhibited in towns where "Rain or Shine" was likely to be presented.

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## DIRECTED

## BY

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# Some Critical Knocks And Boosts

For no particular reason, save that it may possibly prove a fairly provocative way to write a June motion picture column, I would ask your leave to get more than ordinarily personal this week. The only philosophical apology I can think of is that criticism, which often has the semblance of being judiciously detached, is, at bottom, so furiously personal that it may be a good idea to offer, from time to time, a frankly individual confession of likes and dislikes, just to give the potential reader a possible check on the observer's viewpoint. Anyway, you may find forthwith some vagrant preferences, prejudices and ideas of this correspondent.

It seems to me, for one thing, that all of us reviewers have grown too insensitive to the mechanical defects of the talking pictures. Because they belong to a new and struggling medium, we overlook the fact that the best of them screech and whisper, thunder out at us suddenly and make the loveliest of voices sound unreal and metallic. At first we were gentle to the hideous noises they made because we felt they were improving, but now we are kindly because our eardrums have become so hardened we are no longer adequate judges of vocal effort. Each screen critic, I imagine, should take some one who has never heard a talking picture with him to a premiere. Thus he might be reminded of the strange noises perpetrated by the films and would recall that the sound achievements of the audible pictures are still pretty amateurish.

I think that William Haines, Glenn Tryon, Audrey Ferris and Sophie Tucker are the most annoying screen players I have yet encountered, and I am just as happy when I don't have a chance to see the popular Miss Joan Crawford at work. I could go very well for several months without seeing Mr. "Buddy" Rogers in the films. It is beginning to strike me, also, that my enjoyment of life would not be curtailed if Miss Sue Carol and David Rollins

would absent themselves from the cinema for about half a year.

The ominous news that the Verdi operas and such stage antiques as "The Great Divide" and "The Servant in the House" are about to be made into audible pictures and that Mr. George Jessel is to be supplied with additional starring vehicles is about as depressing as anything I can think of offhand.

I am convinced that the screen's waste of the exceptional talents of Miss Betty Bronson is one of the major sins committed by a dramatic medium guilty of many heinous offenses.

One of the best performances I have encountered in recent months was that of Miss Joyce Compton, as the sneaking, disagreeable school girl in "The Wild Party" and I cannot understand why so little use has been made of what seems to be a real and striking acting ability.

Why Miss Sally Eilers is not more sought after by the casting directors is difficult for me to comprehend and, unless more use is made of the charm and skill of Miss Raquel Torres, Miss Mona Rico and Miss Dorothy Janis I will be pretty much disappointed by those Hollywood magnates.

Miss Janet Gaynor seems to me the most sensitive and poetic of all the cinema players and, even if her voice registers as pleasantly on the microphone as I'm sure it will, I don't see how it could possibly add to the poignant beauty she can already achieve in pantomime.

It seems to me that Miss Joan Bennett and Miss Anita Page, though they must, so far as type casting goes, be regarded as ingenues, are so far ahead of this particular acting manner that it is ridiculous to confine them to such a restraining classification.

It would give me enormous delight to hear some one, any one, called "a cad" in the manner employed in the cinema subtitles.

I would give a great deal to know why the names of the

characters in a picture as shown on the screen differ so widely from the names provided in the theatre programs. For example, the dialogue in that terrible film, "Father and Son" offered the information that Mr. Wheeler Oakman was a man named Brant. In the programs, however, Mr. Oakman was set down as portraying a personage called Anton Libau.

The only really good talking short I have yet encountered, outside of the news reels and Mr. Benchley's efforts, was "Meet the Wife," with Mr. and Mrs. James Gleason. I think Clark and McCullough, who are so enormously funny on the stage, are dead in the audible pictures.

I should like to discover just whatever became of Miss Jacelyn Lee, who seemed to me the most satisfying of all the cinema villainesses, even though I think most of the Hotllywood players of such roles are swell.

I am looking forward to the day when Mr. Malcolm St. Clair makes his long-planned picture, "Forty-ninth Street," since I still think he is such a fine director it would be grand to see him do a photoplay he really is interested in doing.

Harry d'Arrast and W. S. Van Dyke are to me the most important and stimulating of the newer directors and it is impossible to understand why Mr. d'Arrast is not eagerly sought after by all the producing firms.

I think that the New York motion picture reviewers have more courage and judgment than their colleagues, the dramatic critic; I am convinced that the Manhattan girl reviewers are clever and talented women who are absurdly underrated, and, though Mr. John S. Cohen, jr., of "The Sun" is my favorite critic, I think that the reviews of "Potemkin," "The Passion of Joan of Arc" and "Variety," written by Miss Evelyn Gerstein, of "The New Republic" and "The Boston Transcript" are the highest points reached by cinema criti-

cism here.

It would be pleasant to attend a screen comedy, written by Mr. Arthur Caesar that seemed half as amusing as his New York conversation.

Mr. Neil Hamilton's performance of a flippant young go-getter in "The Studio Murder Mystery" struck me as being so much better than anything of the sort William Haines has done that it is unfair to Mr. Haines to make any comparison.

Mr. Emil Janning's departure is highly distressing, but Mr. Murnau's local work keeps me from being properly worked up over his absence.

I like the screen voices of the Misses Corinne Griffith and Clara Bow because they were so natural and lacking in elocution school mannerisms, and the come-back of Miss Lila Lee seems one of the most pleasant things in talking pictures.

I still think Erich von Stroheim is a great man, but I fear he deserves a spanking, or something.

—Richard Watts Jr.

\* \* \*

## Co-Star In Pathe Film

James Gleason, the playwright-actor, who has been writing originals for Pathe, and Robert Armstrong will be co-starred in "Oh Yeah," Pathe all-talking picture.

\* \* \*

Joseph P. Kennedy announces the appointment of J. Frank Shea as general manager in complete charge of all foreign matters of Pathe, effective immediately.





# Senator Brookhart Flays Movie Heads

Senator Brookhart, of Iowa, is again campaigning for a bill to regulate the film business and stamp out various evils, which are obnoxious to exhibitors. His activities are being followed by the entire industry, with opinions divided in regard to the merits of his bill.

In a fiery speech in the senate, Brookhart recently gave vent to the following remarks:

"Never before was any group of business men so completely subjugated as are the independent theatre owners of the United States.

"Not only has competition been largely eliminated by the unified tactics of the producers through the Hays organization but the producers themselves are fast concentrating control in the hands of a few by the systematic merging of competitors.

"Since the hearing before the Interstate Commerce Committee on my former bill (S. 1667) which revealed a high degree of concentration, Warner Bros., large producers of fine pictures, have acquired the First National Co., a large producing organization which, in turn, controlled the Stanley Co., owning and operating a great chain of motion-picture theatres.

"William Fox, a great producer and theatre owner, formerly an independent, has acquired, through one of his controlled companies, the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Co., credited with being the second largest producing organization, and controlling, in turn, Loew's (Inc.), a great theatrical chain.

"In addition, Fox has acquired the great West Coast, Poli, and Skouras Bros.' interests and is about to exercise options on practically every independent theatre of any size in New York City.

"This reduction of the sources of supply represents only one of the pressing problems of the independent exhibitors. Their most serious problem results from the competition of the producer-owned theatre.

"When the producers first

began to exhibit films in the large 'key' theatres they justified themselves on the ground that such invasion of the exhibition field was necessary to advertise the films.

"For several years the producers have been building and acquiring theatres at an amazing rate, and their actions are altogether inconsistent with a purpose merely to advertise films. Not only that, but they have used their control of the films in a palpable effort to drive the independent theatre owners out of business.

"A producer will allocate his product arbitrarily to an owned or affiliated theatre. An independent theatre owner may be able and willing to pay as much or more for a particular picture, but the producer, standing on his asserted right to choose his own customers under any and all circumstances, will allocate the film to the affiliated house.

"And the discrimination does not end there; they still enforce what they call 'clearance' or 'protection.' This means that the favored 'first-run' house is given protection extending from 30 days to six months over subsequent run houses. In other words, the contract between the producer and his affiliated theatre will provide that the film shall not be leased for exhibition in any other theatre in the competitive territory for the periods stated.

"The reasonable protection accepted by the industry without serious protest in the beginning has been stretched to unreasonable lengths. I will venture to say there are few Senators who have not received protests relative to the inability of independent theatre owners to obtain films until they are so old that their drawing power is gone.

"Coupled with this is the power and temptation of the producers to favor each other in the distribution of their products to the detriment of the independent theatre owner. Thus Paramount, after having taken care of its great Publix chain of

theatres, will naturally prefer to sell to Fox, with his enormous buying power, than to an individual exhibitor or small chain, and vice versa. A trade paper estimates that Fox's buying power next year will approximate \$65,000,000.

With the great producers playing into each others hands in this fashion, the independent theatre can not long survive.

"This argument is offered that we must have a virtual monopoly in the motion-picture business if we are to have fine pictures and fine houses—that the little fellows can not be relied on to provide such luxuries.

"This claim has been widened recently and we hear the recently indicted head of the West Coast Theatres asserting that the public can not have deluxe houses without the exaggerated protection given such houses by the producers.

"This all means that in the mind of the producers, the pub-

lic can not have what it wants, or what the producers want it to have, until every remaining vestige of competition has been suppressed.

"In other words, this great industry wielding such an immense influence on the lives, culture, and manners of the people can never render the maximum of service until it has come under the complete ownership and domination of Adolph Zukor, William Fox, and Will H. Hays!

"It is safe to say that no considerable portion of our population would choose this particular triumvirate to dominate the educational institutions of the country. Yet they are fast achieving a position of equal, or greater, importance.

"The only way in which the public can retain any control over the kind of pictures shown on the screen is to retain the independent theatre owner."

*Mr. Pathe:*

Great work, that adaptation, Mr. Harris. And your dialogue for "Sailor's Holiday" is crisp, expert and ideally suits Alan Hale and his supporting cast.\*

*Ray Harris:*

And now what?

*Mr. Pathe:*

How about staying on to work on Mr. Ralph Block's new production for William Boyd?

*Ray Harris:*

Delighted. You mean . . .

*Mr. Pathe:*

That's it. But don't divulge the title 'til Convention time. (continued)

\*(In collaboration with Joseph Franklin Poland)

# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

**"GIRL TROUBLE,"** a Universal production.

Directed by William Craft.

Scenario by Earle Snell and Gladys Lehman.

Cast: Reginald Denny, Merna Kennedy, Otis Harlan, William Austin, Virginia Sale, Greta Grandstedt, Mary Foy.

Previewed at Parisian Theatre.

## Critical Viewpoint:

This is rather slow in getting under way, but after the first reel or two the action finally picks up and several humorous situations follow.

"Girl Trouble" in substance is not a Reginald Denny starring vehicle. Denny's role is not of stellar proportions. Two or three other players have parts of equal value. Denny does not appear in the film until late in the second reel, but when he does arrive, he makes up for lost time. He plays with his old-time zest and photographically he is more impressive than in recent months.

The plot of "Girl Trouble" is rather old, but several comedy twists have been developed which will draw forth a goodly number of laughs from the audience.

Particularly effective are the sequences dealing with Denny's attempt to sneak downstairs to the parlor for a rendezvous with the heroine while everyone else in the house is spying.

The version of "Girl Trouble" is a silent one. The picture will also be presented in dialogue form.

Merna Kennedy is seen to very good advantage in this picture, and her acting is a great improvement over her previous work.

Otis Harlan also contributes a large portion of fun to the picture. Harlan has never done better work.

Virginia Sale is splendid in a character role. William Austin, Mary Foy and Greta Grandstedt round out the cast.

## Box Office Angle:

This makes an amusing silent feature and will probably be even better with dialogue. "Girl Trouble" should prove a

satisfactory booking for theatres of almost any type.

*Tamar Lane.*

\* \* \*

## Subsidy for Millenium Film Company

Prague. — Millenium Film Co., a non-political company, is to receive a state subsidy of about \$30,312 for the production of a historical film, titled "The Holy Knave." This is the first time, it is reported, that the government of Czecho-Slovakia has given official help for picture production.

\* \* \*

## Starts "Encore," a Talker

London.—The talker version of Arthur Phillip's "Encore" has been placed in production with Tony Wilde, Joy Windsor, Dino Galvani, Cecil Duvall and Frank Starmore in the cast.

\* \* \*

## Jannings with Pommer

Emil Jannings will star in an Erich Pommer UFAtone production this fall.

\* \* \*

## NEA Editor Here

Gene Cohn, motion picture editor of the NEA syndicate in New York, has arrived in Hollywood.

\* \* \*

## New Writers' Contract

Norman Burnstine, J. Audrey Clark and T. J. Ahearn have signed new Paramount contracts. All are working on original stories.

\* \* \*

## Jason Robards Completes

Jason Robards has just completed one of the outstanding roles in Irene Bordoni's First National-Vitaphone picture, "Paris," which Clarence Badger directed. Previous to this, Robards had one of the leading portrayals in "The Isle of Lost Ships" for the same organization, Irving Willat directing.

**"PARIS BOUND,"** a Pathe production.

Directed by E. H. Griffith.

Scenario and Dialogue by Horace Jackson.

Cast: Ann Harding, Frederic March, Leslie Fenton, Carmelita Geraghty, George Irving, Charlotte Walker and others.

## Critical Viewpoint:

"Paris Bound" is subtle and sophisticated type of drama that appeals to the more intelligent. The dialogue is particularly well written and splendidly delivered by the players. It is in some respects a problem play that will appeal to those who enjoy thinking in connection with their screen entertainment. "Paris Bound" is also the sort of picture which will draw much favorable comment from the critics.

On the other hand, it is not the kind of photoplay that will score well with the majority of motion picture patrons. The action is a bit too stilted and the plot is too "talky." "Paris Bound" is the subtle type of stage play that is not particularly well suited to motion picture production as a talking picture. Nevertheless, because of its fine dialogue, it is the very kind of stage play many studios are apt to imagine is ideally suited for an audifilm.

I do not mean that "Paris Bound" is not in many respects an enjoyable strip of celluloid. The plot strikes so deeply into the average home life of young folks that it cannot help but entertain most theatre-goers, particularly the women folk, but as a whole "Paris Bound" is not the variety of material that will be most successful as a sound picture.

Ann Harding gives an excellent performance as the heroine. Her personality, in this picture at least, does not seem well suited to the demands of the screen, but this may be overcome with more work before the camera. Her charming voice, however, will probably compensate for this to a degree.

Frederic March, Leslie Fenton and Carmelita Geraghty also turn in impressive portray-

als.

## Box Office Angle:

A better title would help to put this picture over. Its present title is misleading. A nicely mounted and intelligent picture. Nothing outstanding, but will get by in most houses.

*Tamar Lane.*

\* \* \*

## Stanmore for "Red Pearls"

London.—Frank Stanmore, comedian, has been cast in the Archibald Nettleford production "Red Pearls," being directed by Walter Forde with Frank Perfitt and Lillian Rich in the leads.

\* \* \*

## Mann With F. N. Pathe

London.—Edward Mann has been appointed secretary of First National-Pathe following death of J. V. Fletcher. Mann was formerly with Trans-Atlantic Film Co.

\* \* \*

## Producing "Unto

## Each Other"

London.—A. E. Coleby, author of "Unto Each Other" has taken over the production of the picture from G. B. Samuelson at the Esher studio. Yvonne Thomas has the lead supported by Josephine Earle, Marie Wright, Frank Goldsmith, Harry Lorraine and Molly Weeks. Sydney Eaton is cameraman.

\* \* \*

## Lynn Shores to Direct for RKO

Lynn Shores will direct "The Beloved Rogue" for RKO. A. Leslie Pierce will stage the dialogue with Shores. Rod La Rocque is featured in this picture. Lynn Shores directed several of FBO's box-office hits last year, among them "The Jazz Age," "The Voice of the Storm," "Sally of the Scandals," "Sally's Shoulders," and "Skinner's Big Idea."



# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

**"THE SOPHOMORE,"** a Pathe production.

Produced by William M. Conselman.

Directed by Leo McCarey.

From "Joe College," Corey Ford story.

Adapted by Joseph Franklin Poland.

Featuring Eddie Quillan and Sally O'Neil.

Supporting cast: Russell Gleason, Stanley Smith, Jeanette Loff.

## Critical Viewpoint:

Pathe thought they had a star in Eddie Quillan after "The Godless Girl." Merely an error in timing. In "Show Folks" Quillan was a dud, in "Geraldine" he gave us his first flash of humanness. Now in Bill Conselman's "The Sophomore" Quillan arrives. He should be mighty grateful to Pathe for this vehicle. It is expertly made for laughs. Its pathos give Eddie a chance to emote as he has never done before—convincingly.

I viewed "The Sophomore" at a so-called "sneak preview" in Glendale. The picture was little better than in rough assemblage. The preview went to prove that a good picture can survive almost any conditions of viewing. Had "The Sophomore" been punk in its first preview I doubt whether it would emerge a wow in final form.

Music doesn't do as much for "The Sophomore" as for most pictures current. "Little by Little" is a peach of a number poorly exploited for audience retention. It is not "sold" to the audience. But Eddie and Sally O'Neil put it over. The "big scene" between Eddie and Sally is somewhat muffed. This I am sure will be improved in cutting. The Photophone recording is splendid and Leo McCarey makes the transition from two-reelers to features in highly commendable fashion. He too, owes a vote of thanks to Conselman and Joseph Franklin Poland for skillful building of scenario and situations. But his comedy handling of his players is sure-fire.

"The Sophomore" gets a large quantity of laughs each one worth money at the box office. It is human, it is "professional," a quality all too rare

to date in audible entertainment.

Certain license has been taken in regard to college and campus life, but few spectators will offer objection to this in a film which is so obviously made for sheer entertainment. All in all "The Sophomore" is the funniest and most enjoyable laugh talkie that has been turned out to date and properly exploited it should be a clean-up for Pathe.

The supporting cast, excepting Russel Gleason, doesn't cut much ice. Russ, as Eddie's pal, is sincere and effective.

## Box Office Angle:

A sure-fire hit for all runs and Eddie Quillan's first legitimate bid for the big houses. Will go over big with any type of audience. Book this one by all means, showmen, and make some money for yourselves.

*Tamar Lane.*

\* \* \*

## Redlands Theatre

### Purchased by Fox

Completion of the deal by which the Redlands theatre becomes a unit in the Fox-West Coast chain has been announced by Harold B. Franklin, formerly president and general manager of West Coast Theatres. Franklin announced the closing of the merger to Carl H. Miller, manager of the Redlands theatre, after his return from New York, where he conferred with William Fox.

\* \* \*

## Irving Cummings

### To Direct Jessel

George Jessel arrived in Hollywood to play the leading role in "Hurdy Gurdy Man," a Fox Movietone production which Irving Cummings will direct. Mr. Cummings has just finished direction of "Behind That Curtain."

**"DANGEROUS CURVES,"** a Paramount production.

Directed by Lothar Mendes.

Scenario by Donald Davis and Florence Ryerson.

Dialogue by Viola Brothers Shore.

Supervised by B.S. Ziedman.

Cast includes: Clara Bow, Richard Arlen, Kay Francis, David Newell, Anders Randolph, Joyce Compton and Jack Luden.

## Critical Viewpoint:

Apparently someone on the Paramount lot thought so well of the plot of "Burlesque," which is undeniably a good one, that they decided to lay it against a circus background and utilize it as a starring vehicle for Clara Bow.

For one reason or another, the situations which served so well in "Burlesque" failed to develop into any real drama or pathos of much importance in the present production.

Paramount departed considerably from its usual policy in regard to Clara Bow when it cast her in the role of this shy and demure little circus kid. Clara makes the most of her opportunity, considering the fact that the part was particularly difficult for her. It will be interesting to note the reaction of the general public to the "It" girl in such a characterization. Many may favor this attempt at versatility, but the majority of Bow fans will probably set up a protest.

The tight rope episodes are used to supply thrills for the production. Some of these are good, others fail to generate the expected excitement. Some of this can be overcome in the editing, although by no kind of treatment could a rope walking act be made thrilling on the screen.

Richard Arlen essays the role of the hero. His interpretation of the character is adequate, but a better selection could have been made for the part.

Lothar Mendes has directed the picture in capable fashion. His camera angles are very effective and not over done.

## Box Office Angle:

"Dangerous Curves" is another production with a misleading title. The film has its

good moments and the star's popularity will help to get it by. Taken as a whole, however, it is one of the weakest Bow vehicles of the past year.

*Tamar Lane.*

\* \* \*

## English Star in

### Warner Film

Shayle Gardner, English stage and screen star, who was brought from London to be featured in "Three Live Ghosts," for United Artists, was signed by Warner Brothers for the featured role in "Diarraeli," George Arliss' next starring vehicle.

\* \* \*

## Universal Signs

### Two Directors

Emmett Flynn and Arthur Gregor, who recently directed "Strange Cargo" for Pathe, were signed by Carl Laemmle Jr. Flynn will direct Laura LaPlante and Gregor will direct Mary Nolan.

\* \* \*

## "Whoopee" Not Sold for

### Films, Ziegfeld Says

"Whoopee" has not been sold to Paramount as previously reported, Flirenz Ziegfeld stated. He does not intend to dispose of film rights to the play, he said. In all probability, the Eddie Cantor starring vehicle, will be filmed by Ziegfeld, in his new association with Samuel Goldwyn, producing talker-color films for United Artists release.

\* \* \*

## Tay Garnett Busy

"Oh Yeah?" which Tay Garnett is directing for Pathe was written for the screen by Tay Garnett and James Gleason. This will be an all talking picture and was adapted from the Saturday Evening Post, "No Brakes." Mr. Garnett will have George Green, composer, on the musical end.

# FRED NEWMeyer

Directed  
*for* P a t h e

## *"SAILOR'S HOLIDAY"*

Alan Hale's Starring Production

by Joseph Franklin Poland

Playing Now

*"THE RAINBOW MAN"*

Starring

Eddie Dowling

Sono-Art Production

Directed by Fred Newmeyer



**10c**

*News, Reviews,  
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# THE FILM MERCURY

*VERITAS*



*VINCIT*

Vol. 10, No. 4  
Twenty-Four Pages

HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA  
FRIDAY, JULY 26, 1929

*Edited by*  
TAMAR LANE

## **Did William Fox Slip A Cog At M-G-M?**

**More Fireworks At Equity Meet**

**Studios Plan Salary Cuts**

**Changes Coming at United Artists**

**New Shake-up at F. N.**

**Have Talkies Improved Film Quality?**

## **REVIEWS**

"LAST OF MRS. CHEYNEY"

"SMILING IRISH EYES"

"SAILOR'S HOLIDAY"

"WOMAN TRAP"

"BROADWAY BABIES"

"THE VERY IDEA"

"HONKY TONK"

"KEMPY"

"THE FLYING FOOL"

# Hurl Charges At Equity Meet

Swearing like sailors, speakers at the Actors' Equity Association Wednesday night mass meeting directed their derogatory remarks more to the press than to the producers. A casual observer would have thought that their fight was with the press rather than the producers, so voiciferous were they in their condemnations of journalism and the Fourth Estate.

Miss Jetta Goudal after entertaining the hearers with her subtle humor launched a broadside at the Los Angeles Herald. Patrick Irving O'Hay, after panning Will Hays and challenging Noah Beery, said the efforts of the gentlemen of the press didn't matter as today's paper tomorrow would be used for sanitary purposes.

Following O'Hay, Lawrence Grant assailed the Los Angeles Times as a damnable rag and eloquently compared the reporter of that paper with Hans Anderson, Grimm and writers of fairy tales. Grant then waved about a page from a trade paper and said that it was worse than the Boston Transcript when it came to publishing news weeks too late.

"Things look brighter than ever," said President Frank Gillmore as he opened the meeting by introducing Sam Hardy who is general manager of the Carnival to be held August 3. Mr. Hardy said that 10,000 tickets had been sold and that it had been necessary to have an additional 2000 printed. He also reported that he had been promised entertainment assistance at the carnival by Irene Bordoni, Charles King, Ben Lyon, Mae Murray and Paul Whiteman.

William La Plante, a brilliant speaker in any gathering, criticized the players with long term studio contracts as fence straddlers, deplored an alleged state of censorship of Equity cause news by the press at large, and encouraged his audience with a reminder that motion pictures were the entertainment of the masses that these masses were mostly labor

in sympathy with the actors' problems and that the producers would get the greatest blow at the box offices throughout the country when these masses refused to patronize.

Mr. La Plante also cautioned his hearers not to yield to temptations and lures of careers; at least, not until the case of Equity vs. Warner Bros. and Tully Marshall was adjudicated in the state supreme court. Yielding, he said, an actor would be found "irrevocable" and with "a brand on his brow."

Cheers greeted the announcement of donations of \$2500 and \$1000 received respectively from Mae Murray and Marion Davies, while hisses attended the reading of names added to the membership suspension list. These names were: Norman Trevor, Helen Gillmore, Nita Martan, Martha Mattox, Mary Grant, Phillip Smalley and D. R. O. Hatswell.

"Under no circumstances will our union or the Marine Cooks and Stewards association, or the Marine Firemen, Oilers and Water Tenders Unions, furnish any crews to any vessel used in the movie industry until the trouble has been settled between Equity and the producers," was an excerpt read from a letter received from Harry Ohlsen, agent of the Sailors Union of the Pacific.

While "all alien actors at present working in Hollywood will not be interfered with in their present or future work," President Gillmore read from a resolution, Equity "would frown on the wholesale importation of aliens since it would interfere with the employment of those who are at present in pictures and would seriously affect their incomes."

Captain Patrick Irving O'Hay, who boasts of having served in eight wars, excluding the Equity fight of 1919, accused Will Hays of being a whipper snapper and having less manhood in his whole body than Frank Gillmore had in his little finger; and pleaded with his fellow actors to ignore at-

tempted attacks on Gillmore. He then asked to have the word passed to Noah Beery that he (O'Hay) would be in town about a month.

Others who spoke words of encouragement at the meeting were Reginald Denny, George Walsh, Montagu Love and Harry Stubbs.

A formal resolution containing the endorsement of the California Progressives was received and read.)

\* \* \*

Bert Kohler, who has been prominent in the Universal electrical staff for several years, has been promoted to the sound department. He is now working in the preparation of the German version of "Broadway."

## CHANGES AT UNITED ARTISTS

United Artists also takes its place this week among the studios mentioned as slated for a production upheaval. Chief among reports is one which says that Mike Levee will shortly retire from the United Artists studio staff.

It is believed that United Artists' recent alignment with Paramount is somewhat responsible for the impending changes at U. A. Joseph Schenck has arranged with Adolph Zukor for some heavy financing for United Artists and it is understood that under the terms of the deal Paramount will have a say in the future production policies of U. A. This, however, has been denied by Schenck.

Nevertheless, it is expected that United Artists is now pre-

Harry Langdon to Wed Helen Walton

Harry Langdon, famous screen comedian, will be married this Saturday evening to Helen Walton, to whom he announced his engagement some weeks ago.

The ceremony will be performed at the home of Alice Calhoun, also well known in filmland. A host of friends will be present for the occasion.

Langdon is now under contract to Hal Roach.

\* \* \*

\$5,565,074 Left by

Jules Mastbaum

Philadelphia.—Exclusive of realty holdings, Jules E. Mastbaum, former Stanley president, left an estate of \$5,565,073.84, it is shown in tax appraisal returns by the executors. Mastbaum died Dec. 7, 1926.

paring for a big production drive and in line with this campaign there will probably be several let-outs as well as many new additions to the studio personnel.

Mike Levee will take an important post at the Paramount studios, according to report.

\* \* \*

Perez Title-oguing

Three Pictures at Once

Paul Perez, Hollywood's busiest "title-ogue" writer, is now engaged on three productions at once. They are "Hard to Get," "Dark Streets" and "Smiling Irish Eyes."

The Colleen Moore picture marks Perez's nineteenth consecutive assignment at First National. He will soon start on his fifth dialogue script.

HAROLD E. TARSHIS

[TITLES &]  
[DIALOGUE]

Morningside 11485



## \$5,112,000 Profit for Paramount

Consolidated net profit for the second quarter of 1929 is estimated by Paramount at \$2,550,000, or \$1.14 per share on 2,242,862 shares outstanding, and net for the six months at \$5,112,000.

Profit for the second quarter of 1929, as estimated, is approximately 58 per cent greater than the profit for the corresponding quarter of 1928, the previous record second quarter of the company.

\* \* \*

### Montagne Writing

#### Original Plays

Edward J. Montagne, editor of the Paramount studios, is now reported to be writing some original screen plays in addition to his regular duties of lining up story material for the Paramount program.

Montagne is the author of several stage plays and vaudeville sketches which have been produced behind the footlights on Broadway and throughout the country.

\* \* \*

### Warners to Enter

#### Equipment Field

Warners plan to enter the equipment field on a national scale via Continental Theatres Accessories, Inc., which starts operations Sept. 1, with Harold Rodner as president. A general line of equipment and accessories will be handled, according to plans.

The new company will start functioning in New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Los Angeles, with other branches to be opened as rapidly as deemed advisable. The New York headquarters will be located in the new First National building.

\* \* \*

### Sign Two More

Elliott Nugent and Lawrence Grant have been signed to long term contracts by M-G-M.

# Did Wm. Fox Slip A Cog At M-G-M?

Will William Fox discover some day that he has been outmaneuvered when he sets out to cut down on the M-G-M overhead and work some kind of a definite amalgamation between M-G-M and the Fox organization for purposes of economy?

Maybe he has and maybe he hasn't, but the chatter is going the rounds to the effect that some of the smart boys in M-G-M have thought and moved a little quicker than William Fox—which, requires some fast action, we'll say—and have themselves sitting pretty for the day when the Big Boss finally decides to lop off a few of the big executives salaries.

In other words, the rumor says that the old army game has been pulled off on William Fox. The insiders in M-G-M have passed out nice contracts to their friends, which insures them a long time berth in the M-G-M organization at handsome pay even beyond the time that Bill Fox may have planned to keep them.

It has been taken for granted that the day would eventually arrive when William Fox would seize personal hold of M-G-M affairs, fine-tooth the organization and dispose of the majority of high priced executives who now contribute considerable overhead to the company. That Fox would permanently maintain two large personnels for these two organizations is farfetched, especially as much of the work now being done both in production and distribution is a duplication of energy and a waste of money. It will be noted that the Warner Bros. quickly combined the affairs of Warner organization and First National, especially in regard to studio matters, and they are working the two staffs closer together every day.

William Fox is also understood to have planned such a move, merely waiting a few months to make everything look right. But he forgot one thing, a contract is a contract and once it has been made with an employee the latter has to be paid weekly whether the boss wants him in the company or not.

According to filmland chatter, some of the fast workers in the M-G-M magic circle remembered the above fact and to make sure that their boy friends would be nicely taken care of in case of a shake-up, they passed them out nice contracts or renewed their old ones. William Fox, of course, will be the philanthropist and foot the bill.

In future, Bill Fox will probably give orders that no contracts of any kind are to be signed or renewed until either he or some other of the Fox organization have passed upon them.

Lining things up pretty for friends and pals has been a popular racket in the film industry for several years. Almost every big executive about to leave a film concern for other connections does it, and

yet for some reason or other the big bosses have never gotten wise to the dodge.

It is practiced in many home office, distribution and studio circles, particularly the latter. It is a very simple matter. A certain executive is about to quit a studio, or perhaps he sees some changes coming and knows that the order may be given to weed out the organization. He immediately calls in his close pals and cronies and takes up options on their old contracts or gives them new ones.

When the shake-up comes and the Big Boss starts to lop off the pay roll he finds that the friends of the executive are all on long term contracts and they can't be fired. In some cases executives have even gone so far in this racket as to hand out two and three year stright contracts, minus any options, just prior to a shift or shake-up and new bosses of the studio have been forced to pay out huge salaries over a term of years without any recourse.

## Gene Towne

[Fourth Year Under Contract]

## "Drag"

in Collaboration with Bradley King

Starring Richard Barthelmess

\$2.00 Top—Warner Theatre, N. Y.

A First National-Vitaphone

All Talking Production

Directed by Frank Lloyd

COMING  
EXCELTONE

H. M. HORKHEIMER, President

## Seek New Sound Device for Deaf

New York.—A double amplifier without batteries working from a direct 110 current 60 volt light socket is the latest improvement and the greatest step forward in the attempt to assist the deaf to hear the talking pictures, according to Gerand Pacent, president of Pacent Reproducer Inc., who announced today successful tests made with several practically deaf people.

The tests were made in the laboratories of the corporation and will be followed by more extensive tests in a few days, the president says.

Stating that although headway has been made in the past in assisting people afflicted with deafness to enjoy sound pictures an entirely new and revolutionary method is expected as a result of further experiments in the test rooms of the Pacent plant.

Similar tests, according to the official are being made by every important manufacturer

## \$1,300,000 Suit

### Against S. Z. Poli

New Haven, Conn.—Edward P. Egan, real estate broker, and two Springfield brokers have brought suit for \$1,300,000 against Sylvester Z. Poli, alleging that amount due them as commission in sale of the Poli circuit to Fox for \$26,000,000. The trio claimed to have been retained by Poli to find a purchaser for the circuit.

of sound reproducing apparatus since it is recognized as an essential part of present and future sound equipment.

Over 4,000,000 people in the United States alone suffer from partial or total deafness, says president Pacent, and this staggering amount of potential theatregoers must be assisted in enjoying their favorite amusement. Failure to do so not only is a selfish practice by the manufacturers but will eventually cut a big slice from the annual picture incomes of the producers, the official states.

## Melody Lane

In addition to his duties as manager of the song department of both First National and Warner's, Ray Perkins manages to write an occasional score. Just now he has completed the lyrics and music for Warner's first out-door talkie "Under the Texas Moon" and several songs for Colleen Moore which she sings in "Smiling Irish Eyes."

The first of the Broadway song-writing teams to free-lance is Jesse Greer and Raymond Klaggs. They have been at M-G-M since arriving, writing "Low Down Rythm" for "The Hollywood Revue," several songs for "Marriane" the theme song for "Wonder of Women" and a catchy tune called "Sophomore Prom" for "College Life."

"Sally," First National production starring Marilyn Miller, is to have a new set of tunes. Al Dubin and Joe Burks, have been assigned to the score and the released picture will have but two songs from the original "Sally" the balance of the score to be written by Dubin and Burke.

Con Conrad, of Conrad, Mitchell and Gottler, Fox song writers have composed a jazz rhapsody written in the same vein as Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." The rhapsody as yet unnamed will be heard in a forthcoming Fox production. After an elaborate symphonic arrangement has been made, the piece will be played in concert. Howard Jackson is writing the symphonic arrangement.

Al Jolson and Dave Dreyer composed a song for the United Artist picture "Tin Pan Alley," called "A Year From Today." Now the Talmadge picture is to be called "A Year From Today," probably because of the songs chance for success is assured. Dreyer is

now writing with Ballard MacDonald the songs for M-G-M's "Cotton and Silk" starring the Duncan Sisters.

Billy Rose, who has written the songs for "It's A Pleasure," Fannie Brice's first for United is making a series of one reel talkers. They are called "Talkies of the Times" and are topical subjects. Associated with Rose in the venture is Ralph Spence, the title writer.

Dorothy Parker, humorist and poetess, is initiated into the ranks of Hollywood songwriters. While on the M-G-M lot some months ago she wrote a song called "How Should I Know" now being sung in "Dynamite." The music is by Jack King and published by the Robbins Music Corporation.

## Lasky Acquires 145 Chain Shows

New York. — Paramount-Lasky Corporation announced acquisition through an exchange of stocks of all the outstanding capital shares of the Finkelstein and Rubin chain of 145 theatres, known as the Northwest Theatre Circuit. The basis of the stock exchange was not made known.

Early this year the Fox Film Corporation was reported to be negotiating for the purchase of the Northwest theatre circuit.

Northwest Theatres owns and operates theatres in Minnesota, Wisconsin and North and South Dakota.

## Adolfi Supervising "Show of Shows"

John Adolfi, supervising director of Warner Bros. production "The Show of Shows" will personally direct many of the acts which will be part of this revue of revues. Adolfi has completed the Beatrice Lillie numbers and is now busy with several others. The names of the stars are being withheld at present.

## Paul Perez

## Dark Streets

First  
National-  
Vitaphone

Lichtig &  
Englander,  
Representatives

... has completed titling "Hard to Get." He is now working on Frank Lloyd's latest Production ...



# "THE SHANGHAI LADY"

*Dramatized*

from John Colton's Play "Driftin' "

*by*

H o u s t o n   B r a n c h

A John S. Robertson Production

*for*

Universal

# THE FILM PARADE

*As seen by* RICHARD WATTS JR.

Photoplay Editor, *New York Herald-Tribune*

Critics aren't creative artists, of course, but every one else seems to be. The most common basis for assault on one who contemplates the arts professionally is that he has failed at everything else and therefore must take up the menial occupation of criticism. The most surprising people bring up this blighting charge, including those much beset gentlemen who write motion pictures. It is certainly not the contention of this pastoral letter that cinema literateurs are anything less than exceptionally talented experts in their business, but just what there is creative about their jobs is sometimes a little puzzling. It does often seem that they have a lot of nerve scorning critics for any failure to create.

Possibly it might be of interest to note just wherein the creation of scenario writers lies. They are assigned to a certain type of story, which, experience has taught, fits a particular type of star. They are told that there must be a certain amount of love interest, a degree of the less romantic sex appeal, the usual type of comedy relief and a touch of the proper moral sentiment. All the ingredients and their proportions are arranged by chart and pretty much agreed on in advance. There doesn't seem to be much creation in that, come to think of it.

For the sake of argument, though for no other reason, let us accept the absurdly imaginative possibility that a screen writer hit on a fresh story or a comparatively new treatment of an old one, and was, by some freak of providence, allowed to write it. As soon as it was completed, the supervisors would descend on it, the film cutters would get in their sinister touch and a few other experts would become pretty active. Somehow, though, that is supposed to be creation.

As a matter of fact, such a

hypothetical case gives the screen writer much nearer the best of it than he deserves. What really happens is that one man devises a plot, another makes a treatment, a third sets it down in scenario form, three or four others plan the dialogue—on the backs of the menu cards while lunching—an additional gentleman or two puts in interpolated gags and a few more edit it. It is only after this charming gauntlet has been run that the helpless picture is submitted to the previously suggested mercies of the cutter and his pals. They still, by the way, insist on calling that creative work.

As an additional example of this sort of ambitious writing, the famous but not far from typical case of a nameless and successful Hollywood citizen might be mentioned here. He is, it seems, an expert on plots, situations, treatments and all the other details of story manufacture, and his services are frantically sought after. His ingenuity in the matter of devising narrative is, I am told, not far from the talk of the town. The plot expert, it appears, is a studious person and Hollywood is edified to see how much time he spends in his library. Since it happens, however, that this library consists of a forty volume edition of "Brief Resumes of the Great Stories of Literature" and bound files of "The Saturday Evening Post" since 1900, one begins to suspect that he is a sort of literary critic, as well as an imaginative creator.

The point that I am striving to make is not, I repeat, that the Hollywood writers are incompetents and illiterates, who even have difficulties scribbling figures on the table cloths. I do think, though, that the construction of story and dialogue for the photoplays is such a synthetic, imitative and generally communal effort and it is so be-

set by the demands of magnates, censors and audiences that it is about as scantily creative as any form of writing well could be. If the films do anything they destroy individuality and literary quality in writing, and reduce authors to an embarrassing position of subserviency that the arrival of screen audibility hasn't changed. What a nerve they have talking as if they were free artists!

The most engaging thing about cinema sound recording is, in the opinion of this timorous observatory, the gentle softness of a pistol shot. Though a footfall, the crinkling of chiffon or the tearing of a piece of paper may boom out at you ferociously, you can always count on an outburst of gunfire being restful and sedate. To some of us who cower in a theatre when our dramatic instinct tells that gun play is due, and who regarded the use of a silencer in "Within the Law" and "Broadway" as approximately the greatest strides yet made by the American stage, there was something beautiful in this talking picture idealization of an unpleasant noise.

The scientists won't let us alone, though. With their sinister passion for doing something, whether it deserves being done or not, they are now hard at work eliminating what they absurdly see as a defect, and it is pessimistically reported that they have succeeded. According to a recent bulletin from Hollywood a device has been perfected that will make pistol shots and the exhausts of gasoline engines sound natural. Yet the inventors insist on regarding the most reactionary news that has come out of California since the Mooney-Billings trial as coming under the head of progress!

As a matter of fact the idealization of sound is a far greater virtue of the talking picture than any one has yet realized.

That the recording of voices and the general quality of reproduction is still distressingly low can hardly be disputed. Nevertheless a number of admirable things have been done with sound, possibly out of that very distortion that comes from the mechanical imperfections of a new device; but as soon as scientific accuracy has been achieved, these incidental but important values will be destroyed. Meanwhile the talking pictures are building up a sound system of their own that, in more than one way, has improved upon nature.

For one thing, of course, there is that matter of the pistol shot. Perhaps the most effective and exciting sound that has yet been invented by picture audibility, however, is the hum of a motor car. There isn't, so far as I can see, anything unusually lovely about the sound in what we quaintly call real life. As employed in "Bulldog Drummond" the noise is both exciting and rather beautiful, improving emphatically on the original version. "Bulldog Drummond," incidentally, had another excellent sound effect when it allowed you to listen to the equivalent of rain falling outside an eerie country inn. Here again was what Mr. Ziegfeld might well refer to as a glorification of a realistic rainstorm.

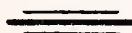
What happens is that the film producers offer, not a careful imitation of sound, but rather a symbol of their effects. Just as the pictorial artists, my learned friends tell me, employ symbols for literal, so have the films, perhaps by accident, built up their own system of sounds, in which the gun shot, the engine hum and the fall of rain, for example, are significant poetry, rather than straight naturalism. If the mechanics of the film offer us devices that will decrease the idealization, then they will be doing the cinema an ill service.



# HARVEY H. GATES

writer

First National Studios



coming releases

Al Jolson

"Say It With Songs"

Dolores Costello

"Hearts In Exile"

past releases

"The Terror"

"The Desert Song"

Warner Bros. Vitaphone Productions

## Have the Talkies Improved Movie Standards?

The talking picture has almost completely ousted the silent. Prophecys are still made regarding its permanency. Articles are written praising it, claiming it will elevate movie product; some writers declare otherwise. Maybe eventually dialogue will lift the movies to a higher standard, but up to the present, talking films have been amusing and entertaining rather than fine.

There is no question that many of the audible productions have been diverting, but they have not reached the heights of "The Patriot," "The Docks of New York," "The Way of All Flesh," "The Big Parade" and many others.

"The Letter" is the only first-rate drama since dialogue has supplanted silence. This film did not descend to motion picture restrictions, but kept to realism and a brilliant end. It is an effort of which to feel proud. "Hearts in Dixie" is the only other presentation that did not pander to the box-office, and that classifies as first-rate.

The outstanding successes have been "Alibi," "Bulldog Drummond," "Broadway Melody," "The Singing Fool," "Madame X," "In Old Arizona" and "Close Harmony."

These pictures were enjoyable, but how do they compare with "The Covered Wagon," "The Big Parade," "Tol'able David"?

M-G-M should be handed a medal for its work on the old hackneyed, tear-jerker "Madame X," however the story is just cheap, tawdry and sloppy. "Alibi" is darn good melodrama, but it hasn't the distinction of "Deception." "The Broadway Melody" was proclaimed a celluloid masterpiece although it is only good clap-tray with some melodious songs that sent the people away singing or humming them. "Close Harmony" is pleasing, but it isn't even a third-rate opus. "The Singing Fool" is sure-fire sentiment that cannot fail, especially with the presence of the popular Al Jolson. "In Old Arizona" is one of the

most entertaining pictures made—silent or talkie.

Despite all of these successes "The Letter" is the only picture which is really high class.

The talking picture has brought sentimental love to the foreground—mother, father or child—but it has done little to lift the cinema out of its infantile growing pains.

Regarding the present comments that talking pictures are a failure, that exhibitors all over the country are kicking because of poor business, it might be more correct to say that motion pictures are a failure. For before sound burst on the screen, exhibitors and producers were deploring the empty houses. However, certain pictures pack theatres and others are unable to draw, this condition has always existed and always will. It has nothing to do with the production being audible or otherwise. I know a silent picture without a theme song would be a relief to me.

A program now consists of a newsreel, a two-reel comedy and the feature cinema. All shadows talking and singing. The lack of a live human is depressing. Terrible as most prologues are, it is a certainty that before six months are

## New Shake-up At First National

First National is the latest studio to feel the effects of a retrenchment drive in regard to production costs. The Warner Bros., after closely inspecting the cost sheets at First National are reported to have given orders that some slashing be done immediately.

The negative cost at First National is far higher than that at the Warner studio and the Warners are said to be of the opinion that there is no reason why a production should cost so much more at the Burbank studio than it does at the Sunset Boulevard plant.

Both the writing and shooting of scripts will be speeded up on the F. N. lot and there will be a general curtailment wherever it is believed that any economies can be effected.

over, the prologue will be much in evidence. This may be good news to Sid Grauman—he can start letting his hair grow again.

Out of the talking shadows we have two photoplays to cheer us as to possibility of its artistic future, "The Letter" and "Hearts in Dixie." The melodramas can take care of themselves.

—ANABEL LANE.

First National is also in the limelight in connection with reported friction between various executives and workers. Ray Rockett, producer for First National, resigned last week as a result of a disagreement over a story. Rockett recently returned from Germany where he produced 17 features for the company in Berlin and four in London.

Among the films which Rockett has produced for F. N. during the past few months are, "Fast Life," "The Squall," "The Girl from Woolworths," "Hard to Get" and "Children of the Ritz." Ned Marin, another associate producer, has also left First National.

Al Rockett, now reported as vacationing at Malibu, has a contract with First National that has several months to go. There have been rumors that he is also resigning shortly from the company but this is denied.

\* \* \*

Hal Davitt, of the Darmour-RKO scenario staff has been assigned to work with the director on the set during the filming of the H. C. Witwer Record Breaker comedies. Davitt was formerly in the Fox, Universal and Sennett scenario department.

# Pierre Couderc

## Writer

## Universal



*In behalf of Mr. Ray Harris I wish to thank Mr. Ralph Block, Mr. Carl Hovey and Mr. Joseph Franklin Poland for the splendid association which Mr. Harris enjoyed at Pathe in the preparation of "Sailor's Holiday" and "His First Command" for the screen.*

*I am privileged to announce that Mr. C. Graham Baker, acting for First National has contracted for Mr. Harris' services to write and dialogue Vitaphone Special Productions.*

*sig schlager*

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*Harry Lichtig  
(Lichtig & Englander)*

# Highlights On the Equity Situation

The following telegram was received by President Frank Gillmore:

"Actor's Equity Members, care of Miss Nance O'Neill, 1722 Sycamore St., Hollywood.

"I have always been in hearty sympathy with the good work which Equity did for the actors of the stage. If there are similar evils in the moving picture business I hope that Equity will be able to correct them. I am taking a needed rest after a very long and hard picture so that I may not be able to attend your meeting, but I am sending a check for one thousand dollars as a contribution to the cause.

Marion Davies."

President Gillmore also announces a contribution of \$2,500 to the Campaign Fund from Mae Murray.

Following is a list of Equity members whose suspensions will be announced at tonight's meeting:

Norman Trevor, Helen Gillmore, Nita Martan, Martha Mattox, Mary Grant, Philip Smalley, D. R. O. Hatswell.

Following are some excerpts from a letter written to Mr. J. W. Buzzell, Secretary of the Central Labor Council of Los Angeles, by Harry Ohlsen, Agent of the Sailor's Union of the Pacific:

"On my behalf, and on behalf of the members of the Sailor's Union of the Pacific, whom I represent as Agent and Secretary at this port, will you kindly tell the officials and members of the Equity Association that under no circumstances will our Union nor the Marine Cooks and Stewards Association or the Marine Firemen, Oilers and Water tenders Unions furnish any crews to any vessel used in movie industry until the trouble has been settled between Equity and the Producers or the Equity notifies us that everything is O. K. again."

"I so told two officials of the Columbia Picture Corporation who called at our office yesterday, who informed me that there was not strike, that all of

their employees in the studio were union men and women affiliated with the American Federation, that the only trouble was the high paid actors and actresses who were receiving thousands of dollars per week, wanted overtime, and the granting of the same would break the companies. (I knew better and told them so) was also told that one or two of the Equity members would act in this picture as they were under contract with them.

"I told them that we admired the members of the Equity staying with their contracts and completing their agreements as this procedure had always been taken by our unions ever since we had been organized and we had never lost by that.

"Someone last night called me by phone from the Columbia Picture Corporation wanting to know what action we had taken since last they had interviewed me. I answered no action had been taken, but that we would consider taking the job providing they would present written notice to us from the Los Angeles Central Labor Council and the Equity that the job was fair. I have not heard from them since.

"As far as we have been able

to learn they have not yet succeeded in manning the Bohemia, although two of our members in conjunction with two Equity members were making a trip out to the vessel found that they are making preparations for a cruise.

"They found at the time two or three men aboard of which one is a sailor, but not a member of our union.

"We wish to assure the Equity members that we are ready at all times to give any assistance that is possible for us to give in this fight."

President Gillmore has issued the following ruling in regard to the status of alien actors. This ruling was requested by a number of players who are interested:

"All those alien actors at present working in Hollywood will not be interfered with in their present or future work. Alien actors who are featured can be brought in without any objection from us, but the Actors' Equity Association would frown on the wholesale importation of aliens since it would interfere with the employment of those who are at present in pictures and would seriously affect their incomes."

## John Griffith Wray

### Laid to Rest

The death of John Griffith Wray, noted motion picture director, came as a distinct shock to the film colony. His passing will be deeply mourned, not only by his wife, Bradley King, but by the many friends and acquaintances who regarded him as one of the finest representatives of the film industry.

Mr. Wray's death is particularly tragic because of the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Wray have been known as one of the ideal couples of filmland and they had just moved into a beautiful ranch estate in San Fernando, which they had planned and looked forward to for many months.

\* \* \*

## George Walsh Here

### For Picture Work

George Walsh, who recently completed both picture and vaudeville engagements in the East, is back in Hollywood to resume work in the talking films.

Walsh's experience before the footlights is expected to work greatly to his advantage now that the voice is in demand in Hollywood. He is reported to have offers now under consideration.

# JOHN ADOLFI DIRECTOR

Warner Brothers Vitaphone Productions

COMING RELEASES:

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in

"EVIDENCE"

"HEADLINES"



**ARTHUR ROSSON**

**Directing**

**HOOT GIBSON**

**In**

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FRIDAY, JULY 26, 1929

## M-G-M Active With New Films

New productions started in the past few days have speeded up activities at the M-G-M studios.

Lon Chaney's new starring vehicle "The Bugle Sounds," has been started by George Hill, director, who last year went on a secret mission to Africa to film the actual French Foreign Legion in action for this picture, a vivid drama of Africa from Major Zinovi Pechkoff's famous book.

Jacques Fayder, the famous French director, has started his first production in this country, an original by himself, as yet untitled, and starring Greta Garbo. It is a modern story of intrigue in Continental Europe.

Productions due to start shortly are "Cotton and Silk," in which the Duncan Sisters will appear in their first talking picture, the new starring vehicle for Van and Schenck, famous vaudeville stars, also a talking play, and "Lord Byron of Broadway," adapted from Nell Martin's book.

Charles Brabin will start production soon on "The Ship from Shanghai," a vivid drama of the sea adapted from Dale Collins' "Ordeal." This will be filmed at sea, on a ship equipped with a complete recording plant—the first talking picture to be filmed on the high seas.

Ramon Novarro, recently returned from Europe, and Buster Keaton, the comedy star, are both at work preparing for new stories to go into production within a short time, these to be the first talking picture appearances of each.

## Completes First Harriscolor Film

Final scenes have been completed on the first of a series of all-color, all-talking, two-reel novelties being produced by Harriscolor Films, Inc., under their own system of color photography. Exteriors were filmed on specially designed sets at Universal City and the interiors were made at the Tec-Art studios.

R. C. A. Photophone recording was used. Andrew Stone directed; photography was by H. K. Fairall; and sound was by E. W. Rovere and L. E. Tope. The picture was produced under the supervision of Georges Musaphia.

The title of the film is "Make-Believe" and is the story of a mythical kingdom.

\* \* \*

## "Welcome Danger"

### In Two Versions

Harold Lloyd's latest production "Welcome Danger" will be released in both silent and sound versions.

The silent version being completed, the talking version is nearing completion with dialogue by Albert DeMonde.

\* \* \*

## Alec B. Francis Signs for 'Mississippi Gambler'

Alec B. Francis has been signed for the father role in "The Mississippi Gambler," Joseph Schildkraut's first starring picture since "Show Boat," which will be produced by Universal under the direction of Reginald Barker.

\* \* \*

## Change Title

The title of Laura La Plante's current starring picture for Universal, tentatively called "One Rainy Night," has been changed to "Hold Your Man."

## New Firm Plans Burbank Studio

Cortlandt Pictures Corp., recently incorporated at Sacramento for \$500,000, this week took an option on property near Burbank, where its studio will be built. Although no definite announcements has been made by officials of the corporation as to the actual time and place of construction, production plans of the organization are specific.

According to Cortlandt J. Van Deusen, president, Cortlandt Pictures will produce feature dramas, a series of short domestic farces, and legitimate plays in Los Angeles and possibly in the East. The organization will also buy and sell play rights.

Van Deusen, an actor, director and producer, of many years experience, recently came

## N. Y. Stage Director Signs with Universal

Frank McCormack, New York stage director and actor, who has been associated with many successful players and famous players, has arrived in Hollywood to begin work as a director of dialogue at Universal.

\* \* \*

## Green Signed for Role In "King of Jazz"

Harry Greene has been signed for a prominent role in "The King of Jazz," it was announced by Carl Laemmle, Jr., general manager of Universal.

from Indiana, where he had his own studios. Other executives of the newly organized company are L. F. Marsh, vice-president, a well known Los Angeles attorney, and Hunter Keasey, secretary-treasurer and general manager.

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# **Albert Kelley**

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# Just A Few Movie Prejudices

The trouble with writing out a list of your prejudices about the cinema is that you somehow feel called upon to start off with some lengthy explanation of the reason for the selection. This week's pastoral, therefore, will get around the difficulty by passing up the apologies and setting down immediately the following list of likes, dislikes and personal interests.

I would, for example, be interested in learning just what became of the plans Paramount once had for making a spectacular motion picture about the career of P. T. Barnum, with Wallace Beery in the title role.

It would interest me to know what became of Raymond Griffith. The most biting and coldly intellectual of the cinema satirists, he proved too frankly unemotional for the popular taste and disappeared from the screen. With the coming of audibility, it was reported that Mr. Griffith's whispering voice had proved enormously effective over the microphone and that a new and even more impressive photoplay career was opened to him. Yet he has not been heard from since.

It seems to me that Miss Mary Nolan's portrayal of the shallow and flirtatious wife who caused all the trouble in "Charming Sinners" was so shrewdly and subtly humorous that it was not only the best thing in the film but also suggested that this handsome young blonde is one of the best histrionic bets of the current screen.

When a program picture like "Charming Sinners" can manage to enroll such an impressive cast as Ruth Chatterton, Clive Brook, William Powell, Mary Nolan, Laura Hope Crews, Montagu Love, Florence Eldridge, Juliet Crosby and Claude Allister without giving evidence of being the screen equivalent of a George Tyler stage revival, I am inclined to think that there is something in that belief that the better actors are descending on Hollywood.

Mr. Adolphe Menjou's performance in "Fashions in Love"

strikes me as being as deft and suave and quietly satirical as any light comedy performance I have ever seen. It clinches Mr. Menjou's title as the John Drew of the screen.

One of the most pleasant things I have encountered about the talking films is their assistance to the career of Miss Lois Moran. Always a sensitive and intelligent actress, Miss Moran seemed somehow to have reached a rut, until the arrival of audibility. In her first talking picture, "Behind that Curtain," however, she was so skillful in the ways of the new medium that it seems certain she is destined to resume her place among the most important players of the cinema.

Another pleasant development has been the re-emergence of Miss Lila Lee. Certainly Miss Lee has never been as handsome, or, as the boys say, "such an eyeful" as she is at present, but I think that she is now at her best as an actress, also. Her work in a disagreeable and incredible part in that terrible Sophie Tucker drama was excellent, and then, in "Drag," her next appearance, she ran away with the picture so completely that Mr. Barthelmess, who really gave a fine performance in it, was outdistanced by several dozen laps.

The arrival in Hollywood of Mr. Harry Richman for the purpose of becoming a screen star leaves me about as cold as the Byrd expedition. Just why the film magnates think they can make picture heroes out of such commonplace nightclub performers as Morton Downey and Mr. Richman will always remain for me one of the mysteries of the cinema. Incidentally, it strikes me as nothing short of an unforgivable sin to waste that lovely actress, Miss Joan Bennett, in the leading lady's role opposite Miss Clara Bow's dream prince.

It is my firm conviction that if the current It-man of the orchestras, Mr. Rudy Vallee actually does go to Hollywood to make a screen drama, he will

regret it. Possibly I am a bad adviser in the matter, but I think he will retain his popularity far longer if he sticks to radio and vaudeville.

I wish Miss Clara Bow wouldn't try to be coy. Though she is, in a quite individual way, an excellent emotional actress, Miss Bow, whose chief virtue is that she seems so natural, does undoubtedly try for archness in "Dangerous Curves," and while the picture is a local hit, her portrayal is, I fear, not one of her best.

Though the Misses Marguerite Churchill and Dorothy Burgess have been admired for their work on the New York stage, I thought that their playing in "Pleasure Crazy" was colorless and uninteresting. It must be confessed, though, that the picture was so bad that both young ladies certainly deserve a chance in something better.

In "Pleasure Crazy," there was one excellent performance and it was contributed by a screen actor, Douglas Gillmore. Several weeks before I had seen this same Mr. Gillmore outplay Mr. Rod La Rocque all over the screen in a silent photoplay called "The One Woman Idea." I am beginning to think that here is a performer to be watched.

Though, or more likely, because I am a professional Irishman, the title of Miss Colleen Moore's forthcoming picture, "Smiling Irish Eyes" strikes me as being just a trifle painful.

I think that the Hollywood dialogue writers are doing a pretty commonplace job so far, with only the Messrs. James Gleason, Willard Mack and John V. A. Weaver presenting any signs of offering anything. I am still looking forward for that dialogue I anticipate from Arthur Caesar.

I wish some cameraman

would photograph the handsome Miss Kay Francis more effectively. When she receives that bit of justice, I don't see why she shouldn't become one of the most distinguished of the cinema villainesses.

Speaking of screen villainesses, there is Miss Edna Murphy, whose work as an ingenue had never particularly impressed me, but who gave such a vigorous characterization of Miss Fannie Bryce's faithless sister in "My Man." Here, I think, was one of the most realistic performances of the talking pictures. I wonder where she has been lately.

RICHARD WATTS, JR.

\* \* \*

Julian Eltinge, one of the foremost stars of both the legitimate and vaudeville stage, is the latest to succumb to the lure of talking pictures and has been signed by the Jesse Weil Productions for a series of four talking features.

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# Studios Plan More Salary Cuts

That big producers are working together on a campaign to bring about drastic cuts in the salaries of prominent screen players and stars is further indicated by recent developments.

Various high priced stars whose contracts are expiring are not receiving new offers from their employers, neither are they being tendered propositions by rival studios. This applies even in the case of stars who have box office reputations and a large fan following.

Magnates have always objected to the big salaries drawn by screen stars but in the past they have been powerless to overcome this because the star has been the chief means of pulling patrons to the box office.

Magnates now assert, however, that the talkies have brought about a new condition and that it is the picture itself that draws and not the individual player. They are seizing this long awaited opportunity to

cut down on star salaries and at the same time curtail the power of the star in regard to production affairs.

In line with this scheme the various big studios are already signing and grooming a new group of young screen players at low salaries and featuring them in leading roles. Producers are of the opinion that these newcomers can be quickly established as favorites and that the difference between their pay checks and the salaries paid to the present group of stars will effect a saving of millions of dollars a year and in addition restore the magnates to full power over their studios.

The recent merging of various companies is greatly aiding the magnates in their curtailment plans and working to the disadvantage of the stars. It was the keen rivalry and wide spread competition among film companies in the past that boomed up the big salaries. As soon

as a popular screen player neared the end of a contract several rival companies immediately got busy and proffered contracts calling for an even higher figure than the player had been getting. In those days, however, there were as many as eight and ten different companies to take a hand in the bidding and force up the ante in favor of the star.

Such times have passed. Where formerly a star might have expected a bid from both Fox and M-G-M, who were keen rivals, the bid is reduced to just Fox, who controls both companies. The Warners now control First National, killing off another competitor, and with United Artists now aligned with Paramount still another bid is chopped off the list.

In other words, where a star might have juggled a contract between eight or ten studios the number of important competitors is now reduced to three or four: Paramount, Fox, Warner

Bros. and possibly RKO. Universal and Pathe do not follow the policy of signing highly paid stars, but prefer to make their own favorites. Neither are there any independent companies today who can afford to take a chance and sign up big-pay stars.

Adolph Zukor seems to be the leader in this movement, with Paramount being the lead off company in putting the plan into practice, other studios now falling rapidly into line.

\* \* \*

## Gibson Returns

Hoot Gibson and his outfit have returned to Universal City from the rodeo at Salinas, Cal., where action and sound effects of the rodeo were taken for Gibson's current production, "The Rambling Kid," under the direction of Arthur Rosson.

# Mann Page

*Announces the Title of His*

*Latest Script Complete with Dialogue*

## "WAITING"

For Copyright Purposes

*Author of —*

"LONESOME"—Universal

"THE COUNTRY DOCTOR"—De Mille

**ANABEL LANE***Says*

Barring "The Patriot" I have never seen a silent picture where the actors and actresses played royal or titled roles with an air of ease. They acted as if they were at a masquerade ball, and that they were unaccustomed to their costumes. And oh, how "elegant" they tried to be—so stiff they were ludicrous.

With the talking pictures and stories dealing with social life, the celluloid players appear as self-conscious as they did in the silent photoplays of court life. They try very hard to appear cultured and blase.

Let us have more melodramas, underworld and nightclub cinemas.

Vera Reynolds has been cast in the all-talking picture "Tonight at Twelve" in quite a different role than we are accustomed to seeing her. It is that of a somewhat sophisticated flirt. However, this talented little actress needs but the opportunity to prove she is not limited to any type part.

Charlie Chaplin and Lon Chaney are the only two stars who insist they will not talk in their pictures. Both of these

**Lee to Write Script**

Robert N. Lee has been engaged to write script and dialogue for an elaborate all-talking feature cled "The Dude Wrangler," which will be produced for Mrs. Wallace Reid.

\* \* \*

**Albert Gran to Warners**

Albert Gran is doing black-out sketches in Warner's "Show of Shows."

stars are extremely popular, and it will be interesting to watch the result of their decisions. Many claim that silent films will be back in a year—we will watch the public reaction to Chaplin and Chaney.

By the time Chaplin's production is released about 90% of the theatres will be wired. If Charlie Chaplin's picture is up to his standard—a monetary comparison with his previous ones can be made. I believe his move is a wise one—for art such as his is rare and his little cockney voice might jar some of his fans.

Even with the combination of Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, it does not seem possible that Shakespeare will be as big a money maker as Bayard Veiller. In the large cities curiosity will draw the first few weeks—after that it will depend upon the merits of the picture. The cost of this photoplay must be startling.

## New Policies for Tiffany-Stahl

Rumors are loose again to the effect that Tiffany-Stahl is planning some radical changes in the policies of the company. L. A. Young, financial backer of Tiffany-Stahl, and Cook, his right hand man, are said to have held lengthy conferences in New York during the past few weeks and are now ready to start a new drive in the interests of the company.

Not only will changes be made in the studio personnel but it is expected that the company will adopt new production policies. Tiffany-Stahl is said to have been going through tough sledding in its attempts to buck competition, which is particularly acute because of the new vogue for sound.

If its present film policy is adhered to, close observers believe that Tiffany-Stahl can make very little progress and it would not be surprising if the company even lost ground

during the next few months.

L. A. Young, however, is reported to be determined to put the organization over in a big way. He is well connected financially and it is said that he is prepared to sink more money into Tiffany-Stahl this year in an effort to establish the firm on a sound footing. There have been several rumors of mergers but to date the company is still running independently.

\* \* \*

**Nagel Opposite Garbo**

Conrad Nagel will again appear opposite Greta Garbo in her new starring feature, which Jacques Feyder is directing for M-G-M.

\* \* \*

Mrs. Leon d'Usseau, wife of the motion picture director now with RKO, gave birth to a 7 pond boy at six o'clock Tuesday evening. Both mother and son are progressing well.

**J**AMES MADISON, first of the radio colonists, discusses each evening from 6 to 6:30 over Station K P L A, the topics of the day. After tuning in, I hope we will still be friends. I am a free-lance writer of scenarios, adaptations, dialogue, titles and comedy "shorts." 323 North Citrus Avenue, Los Angeles. (Phone ORegon 5627)

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## AN ALL TALKING COMEDY

(In Two Reels)

### "A HUSBAND IN NAME ONLY"

*with*

**Jack Cooper**

(Sennett Comedy Star)

**Ann Preston**

Jack Donovan, Mathilde Fiorenza, Eugene Verdi,  
Bennie Wright and others.

*—All Equity Cast—*

*Music by the Ralph Nase Radio Orchestra*

Dialogue by Allan Dunn

Score by Ralph Nase

Story by Armand Kling

*Talking, Singing, Music, Effects, Laughs  
and Class*

In English, Spanish and Italian

*Directed by*

**FRANK P. DONOVAN**

Assistant Director W. L. Andrews

Photographed by Glen Gano

Supervised by Richard J. Pearl

*The First of a Series of Twelve*

**MUTUAL PRODUCTIONS**

6060 Sunset Boulevard  
Hollywood, Calif.

## VIEWS AND REVIEWS

"HONKY TONK," a Warner Bros. picture.

All Talking.

Directed by Lloyd Bacon.

Adaptation by C. Graham Baker.

Starring Sophie Tucker; featuring Lila Lee, Mahlon Hamilton and George Duryea.

*Critical Viewpoint:*

"Honky Tonk" was made sometime ago when the film producers were signing the vaudeville and night club "artists." It is all right to sign these singers—to sing—but that does not mean they are star material. Film fans look on Clara Bow and Alice White as "red hot mammas" not Texas Guinan and Sophie Tucker.

It would be well nigh impossible to turn out a first rate vehicle for Miss Tucker, as she cannot sing her type song in any background but a night club. And as night clubs have been used for two years, it would take a Sherlock Holmes to find a new idea. So the story is made up of an unsympathetic daughter, a vacillating youth, a waiter and the red hot mamma. You don't believe any of them.

Miss Tucker sings seven songs. Her personality gets over—you like her or you don't. The songs are the popular sort that the jazz population "just adore." The fans who have patronized the vaudeville theatres for years will not be disappointed in Miss Tucker.

Lila Lee has little to do, she does all that is possible with the part. George Duryea is handicapped by a poor role but is pleasing.

Lloyd Bacon directed, he could have improved the production by not emphasizing its frailties.

*Box Office Angle:*

Where Sophie Tucker is popular, her followers will enjoy "Honky Tonk," as it has plenty of songs and Sophie Tucker is much in evidence. The majority of theatregoers, however, will consider this film clap-trap.

"MICKEY'S SURPRISE" a Darmour picture.

Two Reel Comedy.

All Talking.

Directed by Al Herman. Story and Dialogue by E. V. Durling and Hal Davitt.

Recordist, C. S. Franklin; technician Neil Jack. Sound, J. A. Duffy.

Camera, J. S. Brown Jr.

Cast: Mickey McGuire, Delia Bogart, Jimmy Robinson, Marvin Stephens and others.

*Critical Viewpoint:*

This is the second of the Mickey McGuire series in sound. It is a two reeler based on the well known strip by Fontaine Fox.

Excellent use has been made of sound opportunities in this fun film. The audience is not only supplied with a comedy but they get a miniature vaudeville show as well, supplied entirely by a group of clever kids.

There is singing, dancing, satire, burlesque and all kinds of tom-foolery offered by Mickey and his talented gang of youngsters. The whole thing is done in revue style, with one act following quickly upon another and no time or footage lost to allow the audience to grow tired.

The sound recording is particularly clear and crisp in this two reeler. Some of the bigger companies apparently can learn something from the Darmour company.

*Box Office Angle:*

This is a snappy little offering that is just what exhibitors are looking for. Mickey McGuire is a great boy troupier and leads off with the honors, but he gets fine support from the rest of his pals.

*—Tamar Lane.*

\* \* \*

James Tynan, who recently completed the script of "The Street Singer" for RKO has been added to the Darmour-RKO comedy staff. Tynan has a long comedy experience, having worked for Fox, Sennett, Educational and Christie.



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# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

"THE LAST OF MRS. CHEYNEY," M-G-M picture. All Talking.

Directed by Sidney Franklin.

Screen story by Hans Kraly and Claudine West.

Starring Norma Shearer; featuring Basil Rathbone, George Barraud and Lloyd Elton.

## Critical Viewpoint:

For those who enjoyed the delightful play "Spring Cleaning," it is distressing to see the later Lonsdale opus, "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney." It would seem impossible that the English playwright could have written "Mrs. Cheyney" without having worked in the movie industry. For his heroine has gone the way of the movie. There seems to be a celluloid code that a heroine can murder, steal, drink, take dope or chew—provided she is virtuous—and still remain a fine woman. Screen people do not appreciate how ludicrous it is to have a woman who has broken every commandment except the 7th, boast about keeping that one.

So in this M-G-M film, after living with crooks and stealing a \$100,000 necklace, it is somewhat startling to hear Norma Shearer brag about how good she is morally.

The Lonsdale touch only seems to be in evidence the latter part of the picture—at the breakfast table. Then there are moments of smartness—of humans momentarily stripped of their veneer. This is decidedly entertaining, although a Geo. M. Cohan finish spoils this sequence.

There is a lack of ease in the production—a straining to be casual and sophisticated. The picture should have been played in a lighter vein.

Norma Shearer seems to be self-conscious as Mrs. Cheyney. One feels that she is worried about the use of her hands.

Basil Rathbone contributes a nice performance, but loses much of the charm he has on the stage.

The nonchalant manner of George Barraud will appeal to the feminine beholders. Lloyd Elton gives an interesting char-

acterization of the elderly but boring gentleman.

## Box Office Angle:

While this production has not the thrills of "The Trial of Mary Dugan" some will like it and will patronize it because of Miss Shearer's performance in her first talkie. "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney" should prove popular without smashing records.

—ANABEL LANE.

\* \* \*

## Will Write Music for Big "U" Film

Mabel Wayne, famous songwriter among whose outstanding hits are "Ramona," "In A Little Spanish Town" and many others, and Vincent Rose, lyricist who wrote "I've A Feeling I'm Falling for You" are busily engaged at Universal in writing a complete sheaf of new songs for "The King of Jazz," the forthcoming Carl Laemmle Jr., super-production in which Paul Whiteman and his orchestra will star.

\* \* \*

## Joan Bennett Signed

Joan Bennett, who the first of this week signed a long term contract with United Artists, yesterday was given her first talking picture assignment under her new contract. She is to play the feminine lead opposite the well-known New York musical comedy star, Harry Richmond, in "The Song of Broadway" which will go into production in a few weeks.

\* \* \*

## M-G-M Buys "Romance"

"Romance," one of the most famous stage hits of recent years, and in which Doris Keane starred at the Maxine Elliott theatre in New York and later toured America, has been purchased for production as an all-talking picture, it was announced yesterday by M-G-M.

"SMILING IRISH EYES," a First National production. All Talking.

Directed by William Seiter.

Scenario and Dialogue by Tom Geraghty.

Cast: Colleen Moore, James Hall, Claude Gillingwater, Aggie Herring, Robert Homans, Robert Emmett O'Connor, Edward Earle and others.

## Critical Viewpoint:

A light, human story has been devised to serve as Colleen Moore's first talking film. As the title implies, the action is laid for the most part in Ireland, with two or three sequences also placed in America.

Very little effort has been made to build a plot for "Smiling Irish Eyes." Instead, the producers are relying upon gags, incidents and heart interest.

The picture gets under way nicely with some comedy bits, typical of Ireland. A county fair with a pig chase and all the trimmings is worked in for a number of laughs. The romance is also developed in good shape between Colleen Moore and her Irish sweetheart, played by James Hall, who wants to be a violin player instead of a bog laborer. There are some pretty moments of sentiment between the two, enhanced by singing and violin playing.

The first half of the production moves along splendidly and its contents are marked by refreshing appeal, despite the slim thread of story interest. It is in the latter reels that the film suffers. Here the action shifts for a time to New York and the original story setting and appeal are lost while the plot swerves to a musical comedy background, where the hero is scoring success as a violinist.

Somehow or other this part of the film, notwithstanding its other commendable qualities, does not measure up to the first half of the picture and a certain amount of punch and momentum are lost.

Colleen Moore makes a successful entry into the realm of talking pictures. Her voice is clear and distinct. There are no outstanding moments for her

in the story but she makes the most of every opportunity that is offered. She also does well in the delivery of an Irish brogue.

James Hall is appealing in a role that one might have imagined he was not suited to.

## Box Office Angle:

The very fact of this being Colleen's first talkie should help it draw at the gate. Although there is nothing big about the picture it carries plenty of heart interest and on this score alone the film will be regarded by many patrons as a pleasant change from the usual type of sound opus.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

## Irene Rich May

### Star in Stage Play

According to report, A. H. Woods may star Irene Rich in a stage play to be produced locally. Miss Rich's acceptance of the feminine lead opposite Will Rogers in "They Had to See Paris," an all-dialogue production which William Fox is making, interfered with her original plans to be starred on the stage by Woods in New York.

\* \* \*

## "Unholy Night" New Title

"Unholy Night" was announced yesterday by M-G-M as the final release title for Ben Hecht's new mystery story, filmed under the working title "The Green Ghost" and directed by Lionel Barrymore. The story is an adaptation of Hecht's recent fiction hit, "The Doomed Regiment."

\* \* \*

## Support Greta Garbo

Lou Ayres, New York stage juvenile, will play one of the three leading male roles in Greta Garbo's next starring vehicle for M-G-M.



# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

"KEMPY," an M-G-M production.

All Talking.

Directed by E. Mason Hopper.

Scenario and dialogue by Elliot Nugent and J. C. Nugent.

Cast: Elliot Nugent, J. C. Nugent, Roland Young, Clara Blanderck, Norma Lee and Marion Schilling.

## Critical Viewpoint:

Taken from the well known stage success of a few years ago, this photoplay is chock full of laughs and highly humorous situations.

The action is very spotty, there are several dull spots where tempo is lost and the laughs die out, but as the film is still in a preview state this is perhaps to be expected, particularly in a comedy.

The cast of characters is small and the sets are few, yet despite these limitations "Kempy" has plenty of movement and the audience does not seriously feel the confinement of action to close quarters.

Splendidly drawn characters and well written dialogue are the two items which give the production entertainment qualities somewhat out of the ordinary. Elliot Nugent and J. C. Nugent are ideally suited to the roles they portray, and they play them for all they are worth, squeezing out every possible laugh and giggle. The brunt of the photoplay falls upon their shoulders and naturally they carry off the honors of the show.

Unfortunately these players are not known to the movie and this will undoubtedly take some of the edge of the picture, both from box office and amusement angles. Picturegoers prefer to see players whom they are acquainted with. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, but on an average a film has far more chance of success with screen players presented in most of the leading roles.

The cast in "Kempy" however, is quite satisfactory from other angles.

## Box Office Angle:

"Kempy" is a talkie offering that will be enjoyed by almost any type of picturegoer if the

exhibitor can only discover some way to get patrons into the theatre. As it stands, the film has few exploitation angles or pulling power and the exhibitor will have to rely upon word-of-mouth advertising, which will not help him much on a short booking.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

## Bakewell Signed

William Bakewell is playing opposite Alice White in "Playing Around," based on Vina Delmar's story, which First National is producing as an all-dialogue production.

This is the second time Bakewell has been assigned as leading man opposite Miss White, "Hot Stuff" being the first picture.

\* \* \*

## Paramount Plans

### Are Shifted

Advanced production plans for one picture, and a slightly delayed starting date for a second, have changed Paramount's directorial assignment list. Edward Sutherland instead of Richard Wallace will direct Clara Bow's next starring picture, "The Saturday Night Kid." Wallace will direct "Medals," the James M. Barrie story in which Gary Cooper is to be starred.

\* \* \*

Jules Raucourt has been added to the cast of "Jealousy," starring Greta Garbo under Jacques Feyder's direction at M-G-M.

\* \* \*

## Hesser Goes East

Edwin Bower Hesser, well known portrait photographer and artist, has left for a brief trip to the East to have an operation performed on his shoulder. During his absence Karl Hesser will be in charge of the Hesser studios.

"BROADWAY BABIES," a First National production.

All Talking.

Directed by Mevyn LeRoy.

Scenario by Monte Katterjohn.

Dialogue by Monte Katterjohn and Humphrey Pearson.

Cast: Alice White, Fred Kohler, Tom Dugan, Charles Delaney, Bodil Rosin, Marion Byron, Sally Eilers, Louis Natheaux and others.

## Critical Viewpoint:

First National has laid this story against colorful Broadway backgrounds and a goodly portion of melodrama has been thrown in to pep up the action. Despite these elements "Broadway Babies" is one of the most monotonous and tiresome talking films that has been released in several months.

With the exception of one good twist at the finish of the picture, the action and situations are of the usual hackneyed order which mark so many films of back stage life. Even this shortcoming, however, would not have had such disastrous effects, however, if the production had not contained other and far more serious faults. Most plays of stage life are not remarkable for their originality and yet they succeed in being fairly entertaining.

It is the needless repetition of unnecessary dialogue and the inclusion of much superfluous incident that wears down the audience and finally kills all interest in the film. Scene after scene that could have been quickly covered by a few brief bits of dialogue are drawn out to great length until the spectator begins to wonder what it is all about. Apparently the producers either did not know when to stop or else they were determined to use up as much film and dialogue as possible for fear some of it might go to waste on the cutting room floor.

Needless to say, a picture which might otherwise have been at least fairly diverting is now mostly boring, with only an occasional bright spot to lift the audience out of the doldrums.

Alice White does well, considering the fact that this is her first singing and dancing film.

There are certain improvements in technique that might be desired but with such a good start as she makes here, it is only fair that allowances should be made, and there is every indication that she will make marked progress in pictures to come. She has two very effective dance numbers.

Fred Kohler gives an excellent portrayal in a sympathetic role something in which he has not appeared in quite some months. Tom Dugan supplies good comedy relief in a stuttering role but if they don't stop putting these tongue-tied gents in the talkies the public is going to go nuts.

## Box Office Angle:

The title has pulling powers and may draw them in. The songs and dances may help to redeem it with some patrons. As a whole, however, it is a sleeping potion.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

## Bretherton Starts

Howard Bretherton has started direction of Dolores Costello's Warner-Vitaphone production, "Second Choice."

\* \* \*

## Pathe Signs Hearn

Lew Hearn, one of the cleverest and most successful comedians on the stage today, has been engaged by Pathe for featured roles in the George Le Maire comedies.

\* \* \*

## May Get Contract

Lucien Littlefield is to essay a featured character role in "No, No, Nanette," which First National is to produce as an all-talking picture. First National, it is understood, has an option on Littlefield's future services and according to a reliable report, may exercise it before the completion of the forthcoming production.



# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

"THE VERY IDEA," an RKO production.

All Talking.

Directed by Frank Craven and Richard Rosson.

Scenario and dialogue by Wm. Le Baron.

Cast: Frank Craven, Hugh Trevor, Sally Blaine, Olive Tell, Theodore Von Eltz, Allen Kearns, Doris Eaton, Jeanne De Bard, Adele Watson.

*Critical Viewpoint:*

In filming this play the producers have closely followed the technique of the stage. Although this does not allow the sweep and movement which picturegoers usually demand, "The Very Idea" is not seriously handicapped.

A more important defect in the picture is the slowness of the first two or three reels, which are filled with extraneous matter that detract from the brevity and smoothness of the production.

There are some uproarously funny moments in the film, and several situations which contain humor of a very superior grade. The picture also has the additional virtue of being something of a relief from the usual talkie farce, being played along satirical lines which will appeal to better class audiences.

The play carries a clever theme which can be built into an excellent exploitation angle for drawing patrons to the gate, and with good publicity tie-ups much beneficial controversy can be arranged, although the picture is by no means actual propaganda of any nature.

The further the film goes the better it gets—which is something decidedly in its favor, and the ending is a veritable scream. Despite the sincere efforts of the players, the cast seems to detract rather than add to the effectiveness of the piece. With more appropriate players "The Very Idea" would have been one hundred per cent better. Many of the delicious lines of William Le Baron's original play fail to get over in this screen version because of the fact that the characterizations are not impressively drawn.

Richard Rosson and Frank

Craven have made a good job of the direction, in view of the company's decision to produce the picture along experimental lines.

*Box Office Angle:*

When "The Very Idea" is finally snapped up into a continuous flow of action it should make a smart comedy that will be particularly well liked in the better houses. Exploitation can do much to put this production over.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

**New Invention**

**Claimed by "U"**

A newly invented film developing machine, which makes Movietone recording as sharp and as clear as a bell is claimed by engineers at Universal City.

This development has nothing to do with the mechanics of recording, but is a photographic improvement in the developing of sound negative which sharpens up the lines of vibration which produce the sound.

Present methods of negative machine development in laboratories slightly blur these graduations by what is called the Mackey line.

Universal's change eliminates this defect with the resultant perfection in sound.

Plans for a new laboratory to cost \$400,000.00 to house four of these new machines have been started at Universal City with the result that Universal's sound will soon be the clearest on the market.

Roy Hunter and Walter Stern were responsible for the improvement of the first negative developing machine.

\* \* \*

**Phillips Gets Role**

Eddie Phillips will enact the heavy part in M-G-M's new musical movie "Road Show."

"THE FLYING FOOL," a Pathe production.

Directed by Tay Garnett.

Original and scenario by Elliott Clawson.

Dialogue by James Gleason.

Cast: William Boyd, Marie Prevost, Russell Gleason and Tom O'Brien.

*Critical Viewpoint:*

Here is a fast moving comedy drama along lines which appeal to the majority of theatregoers. Plenty of action and laughs sprinkled generously throughout and a story which holds the interest in an engaging manner.

Dialogues are good and so delivered as to keep the audience mentally alert instead of allowing the attention to wander—as seems to be the case with the average talker these days.

Tay Garnett, director of the piece, deserves the lion's share of credit for the success of the film. This boy Garnett appears to know his stuff, whether the film is silent or sound. He has knocked off three hits in a row since joining the ranks of directors a few months ago. Looks like a comer.

Thrilling airplane shots supply the excitement in "The Flying Fool." Garnett has secured some very effective scenes which play a large part in putting the picture over.

William Boyd, Russel Gleason, Marie Prevost and Tom O'Brien are all seen to good advantage.

*Box Office Angle:*

This is typical movie stuff with dialogue secondary, rather than dialogue set to pictures. As such it will be welcomed by the bulk of movie patrons as well as showmen who are shouting that the film producers have the wrong slant on most of their dialogue offerings.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

**Three Writers Added**

**To F. N. Staff**

Three new staff writers have signed under long-term contracts at First National-Vitaphone Studios: Ray Harris, Howard Emmett Rogers and Edward Quayle.

**Jack Donovan In  
Films Again**

Not so long ago the papers were filled with the Mae Murray-Jack Donovan suit, involving the Famous House that Jack Built. This was only one of the many houses that Jack had designed and built in his architectural career. The first was Hollywood's Canary Cottage Cafe; then the Mission Beach Yacht Club; the Brentwood Town and Country School, besides many residences and apartments.

Jack had spent a goodly portion of his life studying and building houses and had gained international recognition for his work, when like a bolt from the blue Mae Murray struck with her suit which threatened to crumple his reputation.

But with a determination born in every Irishman, Donovan plunged on through a sea of difficulties, and is now on the verge of signing a new contract for pictures.

Jack, who will be remembered as Pathe's Western star, has just completed the starring part in International's "Why Women Love." Negotiations have been instituted to re-sign Jack for talking Westerns, but in the interim, young Donovan is considering other offers as a straight leading man.

\* \* \*

**Ukelele Ike Signs**

Cliff Edwards has signed a new contract with M-G-M.

\* \* \*

**Bartlett's Idea**

Radio Pictures has found one solution to the problem of distributing talkies abroad.

Foreign actors have been engaged by Randolph Bartlett, Radio Pictures title editor, to speak prologues and interpolations to RKO features in their native languages.

\* \* \*



# VIEWS AND REVIEWS

"SAILOR'S HOLIDAY," a Pathe production.

All Talking.

Directed by Fred Newmeyer.

Story and screen play by Joseph Franklin Poland.

Dialogue by Joseph Franklin Poland and Ray Harris.

Supervised by William Conselman.

Cast: Alan Hale, George Cooper, Paul Hurst, Sally Eilers, Mary Carr, Jack Richardson, Charles Clary and others.

A preview.

*Critical Viewpoint:*

Good natured knockabout entertainment, all in the spirit of fun, appears to be the aim of this picture. Although there is a definite story outline, more stress is laid upon a chain of gags and events such as might happen to a couple of screwy sailors just arrived in port after a long cruise.

Having just faced a reprimand from the ship's captain the two jolly tars, played by Alan Hale and George Cooper, are anxious to follow the straight and narrow path and keep out of trouble. Their very anxiety for peace seems to lead them into nothing but turmoil, however, and their grief is made particularly acute by a gob on shore duty, who holds a special grudge against them.

This situation presents opportunity for a number of funny sequences and much good comedy results. A love story is worked in to supply the necessary romance.

There were still a few rough spots at the preview which need attention. With some re-editing "Sailor's Holiday" will be greatly improved and garner many laughs that are not hitting at present.

Alan Hale does not show to as good advantage in this film as he has in some of his other recent pictures. His work is entirely satisfactory, however, and fans will no doubt enjoy him as the rollicking tar with the pet parrot. George Cooper makes a splendid foil for Hale and aids considerably in generating many laughs. Paul Hurst is also good as the heavy.

*Box Office Angle:*

"Sailor's Holiday" carries a good title and exploitation an-

gle. It is broad comedy such as most patrons enjoy and the average showman will find it a satisfactory booking.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

Emmett Flynn to

Direct "Shannons"

Following his work in the direction of "Hold Your Man" starring Laura La Plante, which he has just completed, Emmett Flynn has been assigned to direct Universal's production of "The Shannons of Broadway," starring James Gleason and Lucille Webster Gleason. "Hold Your Man" is an all-talking picture, as will be "The Shannons of Broadway," which was Gleason's great stage play.

\* \* \*

Sound News Now

Supplied for Discs

Paramount Sound News now is available with disc accompaniment, states Editor Emanuel Cohen.



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**POLK DIRECTORY BLDG**

"THE WOMAN TRAP," a Paramount production.

All Talking.

Directed by William Wellman.

Adaptation by Louise Long.

From play by Edwin Burke.

Cast: Hal Skelly, Evelyn Brent, Chester Morris, Leslie Fenton, Effie Ellsler, Guy Oliver, William Davidson, Charles Giblyn and others.

A preview.

*Critical Viewpoint:*

"The Woman Trap" starts off as though it is going to be a humdinger. It does generate much thrilling and tense drama in a series of dramatic situations dealing with the underworld. The picture finally becomes involved in several situations which thread upon dangerous emotional and sentimental grounds, however, with the result that much sympathy is eventually lost for some of the principal characters and the picture at last sinks under this handicap.

There is a great deal of merit in "The Woman Trap," nevertheless, and there are one or two vivid sequences which supply the audience with such splendid and gripping drama that they compensate to a large measure for whatever other shortcomings the film may have.

There is a fight in an elevator, followed by a chase thru a warehouse and along railroad tracks, accompanied by sound effects from a locomotive, etc., which are among the most striking and impressive that the reviewer has heard since the launching of the audibles.

An interesting characterization has been prepared for Hal Skelly, in the role of an easy going detective who later becomes hard-boiled when he decided that others have been taking care of his good nature. Skelly delivers an admirable performance. This player seems destined for big popularity.

He has the type of personality which quickly wins the esteem of screen audiences.

Evelyn Brent has a decidedly unsympathetic role and last minute attempts to white-wash her part are of no avail.

There is a good situation in the last reel wherein Skelly discovers that the crook he has cornered is none other than his brother. This sequence carries a certain amount of power but it does not develop into quite the smash that the spectator anticipates. If an added twist of some kind had been injected here it would have helped the picture immeasurably. As it is, the film ends in a rather unsatisfactory and incomplete manner.

*Box Office Angle:*

"The Woman Trap" is tense and fast melodrama. It has some highly entertaining moments and should register favorably with many patrons. The story contains certain elements, however, which will not appeal to some theatregoers.

—Tamar Lane.

\* \* \*

Ralli Again at Fox

Paul Ralli, who appeared in "Joy Street," has been busy again on the Fox lot in a night club sequence for Raymond Cannon's current production, "Why Leave Home?" Ralli's next release will be "Montmartre Rose" in which he is featured opposite Marguerite de la Motte.

COMING  
**EXCELATONE**

H. M. HORKHEIMER, President

"'The Gamblers' as presented in this Vitaphone feature is also to be commended as breaking away from the regular movie formulas. The characters are human beings, not heroes and heroines. . . . Much credit is due J. Grubb Alexander for the screen play and dialogue. He has not only developed the play in an interesting manner, but he has made the characters speak interestingly and to the point at all times."

—Tamar Lane.

"General Crack"

*starring*

John Barrymore

"Evidence"

*starring*

Pauline Frederick

*Warner Bros. Vitaphone Pictures*

with

Dialogue and Screen Play

by

J. GRUBB ALEXANDER



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The Libraries of Northwestern University and  
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